6
FEBRUARY 1988

NEW TIMES

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OF WORLD AFFAIRS

A DOCTOR'S VIEW OF BIG-TIME SPORT

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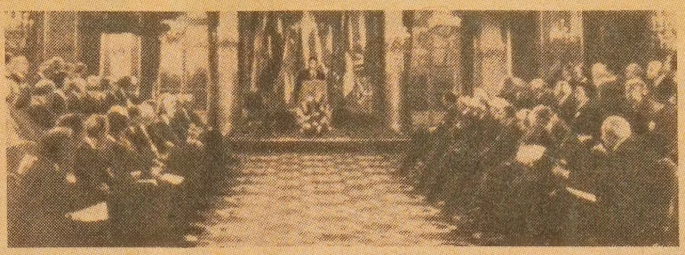
NOBEL LAUREATES MEET IN PARIS



For three successive days behind closed doors in the Elysée Palace 75 scientists from 14 countries discussed the problems of war and peace and mankind's survival, and the role of science in resolving them.

The first international meeting of Nobel prize winners "At the dawn of the 21st century - dangers and hopes" was held on the initiative of President François Mitterrand. The participants have elaborated Sixteen conclusions - a code of conduct in relations between countries and peoples.

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REPERCUSSIONS OF THE SUMMIT

The only hope

The Soviet-American summit and the signing in Washington of the treaty eliminating two classes of nuclear weapons was an event whose repercussions will be felt far beyond the confines of Europe and America. I believe that the wise decision taken by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. on disarmament cannot fail to have a favourable effect on many of the developing countries, especially in Africa. Tens of thousands of people on our continent die each year from epidemics and malnutrition. And we can't always rely on ourselves - we are dependent on aid from international organizations and the developed countries.

The signing of Soviet-American treaties will allow the two mightiest and richest countries to save millions of rubles and dollars that used to be spent on the arms race. I think the best use for this money would be to set up a fund for aid to the developing countries.

The people of my country were helped when drought hit us. That is something we shall never forget.

TADESSE TAFESSE
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Are the odds really even?

My impression is that we are forever yielding to the United States: we gave in on the zero option, and untied the "package deal" proposed in Reykjavik. In other words, we are making concessions all the time, while America continues on its own course. As a result, the treaty signed at the end of last year tips the balance in America's favour. I have in mind the British and French nuclear arsenals. In the event of confrontation, those countries will not remain on the sidelines.

Y. YAROSHENKO
Krivoi Rog, U.S.S.R.

OUR READERS' REFLECTIONS

criticism of the past

The Soviet press has lately published many critical reviews of your country's past. But the Soviet Union is what it is today thanks to that past. You have achieved a great deal. So is this self-flagellation really necessary?

ROBERTO LUCHETTI
Milan, Italy

missiles and bases

Why do we learn of the parameters of our rockets in feet and miles from foreign press sources? Why does our own press only write about NATO bases? After all the treaty with the United States specifies both the location of Soviet military bases and the armaments stationed there.

I. ASTAPOV
Stary Oskol, U.S.S.R.

hazards of smoking

A vigorous anti-smoking campaign is in progress in a number of Western countries. Smoking in many public places and offices is forbidden there. I've heard that in some cases non-smokers are given preference in employment. Isn't it time we've tackled this problem in earnest?

K. ROSLYAKOV
Volgograd, U.S.S.R.

GLASNOST FROM OUR MAILBAG

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

Indelible impressions

Last year I visited the Soviet Union for the first time. All my life I shall remember the Khatyn Memorial. I have seen many such memorials in my own country, but none impressed me so greatly, none brought home to me so vividly all the horrors of the war. The day before we visited the memorial we saw Elem Klimov's film "Go and See" about the fate of Byelorussian villages. It is a tragic film, even shocking in its harsh cruelty. Yet all that really happened. And perhaps for the first time I fully realized that it was all done by people - human beings and not animals. People of my own nationality. It made me ashamed, truly ashamed, of being a German. And I thought: "What would have happened to us if the Soviet people had repaid us in kind?"

To this day I can see the elderly Russian saleswoman in a shop in Minsk. She talked to me and asked about life in my country. She smiled at me, and I was shaken by her friendliness. She may well have had some bitter memories in connection with Germans. But, like all your people, she had overcome such prejudices.

I feel certain that your people's ability to shake off prejudices will give you the strength to overcome all your difficulties and cope successfully with the truly revolutionary process that you call perestroika. You have already surpassed my country in self-criticism and glasnost. Not to mention how very much the Soviet Union is doing to ensure peace the world over. Carry on your good work!

FRANK GUNDLACH
Halle, G.D.R.

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

"The strange war"

In the past few years thousands of my countrymen, Tamils, have lost their lives, and tens of thousands have fled to India and other countries. There was an attempt on the life of the country's leader, and the standard of living has dropped. Unfortunately, all that is happening today in Sri Lanka. "The strange war," as it is called here, is neither more nor less than a struggle for influence between extremist terrorist groupings.

These extremists are now trying to torpedo the agreement concluded last summer between India and Sri Lanka on ending the ethnic conflict and establishing peace on the island. That agreement is in my view the only real way of stopping the bloodshed in my country and bringing the long-awaited peace.

SUPPIAH GOVINDARAMAN
Jaffna, Sri Lanka

Joint efforts are needed

In its issue No. 4, 1988, the magazine carried several articles about AIDS, described as the plague of the 20th century. I believe that this disease is so dangerous that the peoples should forget their mutual differences and grievances and combine their best scientific efforts to combat the invisible and relentless enemy. It is becoming increasingly evident that no country can cope with AIDS singlehanded.

KOSTA STOYANOV
Sofia, Bulgaria

THE WAY I SEE IT

One question too many

I agree absolutely with the view of your French reader (No. 1, 1988) that in the passports of Soviet citizens their nationality should not be stated. The Soviet passports issued to people travelling abroad say nothing more than "the Citizen of the U.S.S.R." So why should it be different inside the country? Wouldn't it be more democratic to omit this clearly superfluous detail?

A. RYVLIN
Leningrad, U.S.S.R.

I'm proud of my nationality

I'm proud of my nationality and do not want it deleted from my passport. Apart from Russians, my friends and acquaintances include many Ukrainians, Jews, and Byelorussians, and none of them feel discriminated against nor do any of the other peoples of our multinational country. I do not know whether nationality is mentioned in French passports. If it isn't, it means the French prefer it that way. To give them any advice on that matter would not, in my view, be tactful.

V. KUCHMA
Dneprodzerzhinsk, U.S.S.R.

DEMAND

Prevent disaster

I am a Mozambiquan, from the province of Zambezia, and I know from personal experience what war means. Because of raids by armed bands I was forced to leave my home and move to the neighbouring province of Nampula. The arms that forced me and many of my compatriots to seek a better life were not nuclear arms, but they too cause immeasurable harm. The United States and its allies should stop to think of the dangers inherent in their aggressive policy: a nuclear war will spare no one.

The world is tired of wars and wants peace. The United States should accept the Soviet proposals on disarmament.

DR PEDRO LAVIEQUE
Nampula, Mozambique

AN ARTIST'S COMMENT

A pilferer: "A stolen bird in hand is worth two in the bush." Drawing by Leonid Tishkov

HUMAN RIGHTS

Double standard

You may read that Britain is a land of free thought and freedom of speech. This ideal is being eroded day by day. British law has been spoken of as an ideal system, held in high esteem at least by a part of the world. Actually, British law is a system of two tiers. One for those with plenty of money, and one for those without.

Each day new examples reach the press of this so-called justice. This week, two drivers were brought before the courts, both charged with speeding offences. The first man being the husband of a Royal Princess was found guilty of driving at 140 miles an hour. He received a small fine. The other man, in the same court, who was a lorry driver, found guilty of the same offence, had his licence withdrawn, and is banned from driving. Money and one's personal wealth can and do allow one to do virtually what one likes.

In the prisons at this time there are many who have had dealings with drugs. And yet recently, the daughter of a member of the Conservative Party found in possession of drugs was allowed to leave the court a free woman.

When criticism is levelled against the quality of medical treatment in your country, one should ask how many of the elderly people of Britain died of hypothermia last winter. Hundreds of the old and sick did die, and the Conservative solution was to give 5 pounds subject to scrutiny into the financial status of the individual. Millions of men, women and children are being forced to beg for handouts from the state. An unemployed person can expect to receive 30 pounds per week. To rent a room, even at the lowest rate, would erode this sum.

Everywhere in London there are literally thousands of young people living under buildings, their only bedclothes being cardboard boxes. And yet this government sees nothing except when these people find an unused and derelict house and move in, then the government acts by sending in the police.

Every aspect of what we considered, social reform under the Labour government, is systematically being eroded. Hospitals, schools, welfare of the aged and infants alike are being cut back in finances, heart research, cancer research are being starved of sufficient funding. Hospitals are facing closures. Under this present regime, warheads, tanks and armaments take priority over the basic human needs.

Billions of pounds are spent on the means of war, bringing profit for the makers. The cost of one aircraft would reopen closed hospitals, equip schools, pay the appropriate rate for nursing staff, care for the elderly - to name but a few things it can pay for.

CHARLES WILLIAM PATTENDEN
Epping Essex, Britain

GLASNOST

FROM OUR MAILBAG

WORLD POLITICS AND HUMAN EQUATION

"The desire to see more and better is not whim, curiosity or luxury. The choice is to see or to perish." These words of the French thinker Pierre Teilhard de Chardin might have been written today rather than half a century ago.

On the threshold of the third millennium, humanity has reached a line which it is impossible to cross without endangering all life on earth. Having found ourselves in a truly critical situation, we are beginning to look at the world around us in a new way, learning to see it as single and integral, interconnected and interdependent.

Faced with the pressing need for an immediate solution to problems of vital concern to the whole of mankind, we find in the United Nations an instrument for reconciling the interests of all members of the world community, however diverse they may be.

The United Nations has had periods of upsurge and crisis, productive activity and time marking. Despite all the reversals in world affairs, it has nevertheless managed to achieve its principal objectives, though not always as effectively as had been expected.

Founded as a rostrum for a democratically organized world order, the United Nations is, both in concept and origin, a body occupying the central place in the structure of international relations. This explains why so much attention is given to it in the programme for establishing a comprehensive system of international peace and security submitted by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries for discussion at the 42nd General Assembly. The overriding goal of this programme is to put an end to confrontation and organize cooperation in all spheres of international relations and human activity. Having discussed these proposals, the General Assembly adopted a document which came to be seen as one of the most important resolutions of the 42nd session.

The representatives of the world community supported the idea of making the United Nations a genuine centre for the coordination of action to further the progress of civilization and ensure a peaceful future for humanity.

The United Nations is not a world government or an international parliament. Nor is it a debating society engaged merely in wishful thinking. It is a working and functional instrument to guarantee the free development of the world community.

Carrying forward the ideas proclaimed in the U.N. Charter, the programme for a secure peace enriches them with new humanist and moral content.

The concept of security is indivisible. Its focal point is the eternal value of human life, for in the complexity of the political struggle and the clash of ideologies and utilitarian interests, man, the principal character in history, has often been forgotten. This is the unhappy paradox of our time.

Man is the yardstick of all things. The placing of man at the centre of world politics, and U.N. activity in particular, is the quintessence of the programme for comprehensive security, and the measure of its humanity.

The world community is above all a community of people, and humanity is impossible to preserve without fighting for each human life and defending the dignity of every individual.

40 years ago...

The U.S.S.R. State Planning Committee has published the results of the fulfilment of the plan for the restoration and development of the national economy for 1947. The targets for gross industrial output have been exceeded by 3.5 per cent. As compared with 1946, gross industrial output has increased by 22 per cent and gross agricultural output by 32 per cent.

* * *

The headquarters of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, operating in the Hubei-Henan-Anhui area, has announced that, as a result of the offensive of the last four months of 1947, the PLA has routed seven Guomindang brigades and the headquarters of the 40th Brigade of the 88th Division, liberated 33 county towns, taken 20,800 Guomindang officers and men prisoner and captured a large quantity of weapons.

* * *

The United States has refused to return the Yugoslavia's gold reserve.

* * *

President Truman has submitted the draft budget for the fiscal year 1948-49 to Congress. The head of the world's richest capitalist state was unable to propose ways of combating inflation, though on his own admission inflation holds the threat of another depression, in other words, of a crisis.

Sufficient funds cannot be found in the budget of wealthy America to meet the requirements of public education and health or solve the housing crisis, of which so much is being written in the American press. Less than a tenth of one per cent of the budget has been allocated for housing, and about one per cent for education.

* * *

Only 17 per cent of Turkey's population, mainly the urban section, can read and write. There are 30,000 villages without even an elementary school.

Crime has assumed such proportions that even the Majlis and the government have had to recognize it as a major problem. There are 18 brothels in Ankara, and Istanbul has a whole street of them, officially listed in the city's directory.

The Turkish press has reported that, during a "courtesy visit" by the American battleship Missouri to Istanbul, part of the "entertainment" offered to the American sailors and their officers consisted of visits to the city's brothels, with the municipal authorities magnanimously defraying the expenses.

(New Times, No. 4, January 21, 1948)

RETRO

Nobel prize winners on war and peace

The American author Elie Wiesel once said that scientists provided mankind with the means for destruction and now it was their job to find ways to save mankind.

That was the theme of the meeting of Nobel prize winners that took place in Paris in the Elysée Palace at the end of January. Of the 200 guests invited by President Mitterrand, 75 physicists, chemists, physicians, writers, economists and public figures were able to attend the gathering. They discussed the issues confronting mankind on the threshold of the 21st century.

The intellectual elite of 14 countries took part in the Paris forum. The Soviet Union was represented by Academician Nikolai Basov and the new co-chairman of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, Professor Mikhail Kuzin. We bring you two interviews given to our correspondents by participants in the Paris forum, as well as the joint document they approved.

A commonsensical discussion

The Director of the Vishnevsky Institute of Surgery of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Medical Sciences, Academician Mikhail Kuzin, gives his impressions on the Paris gathering.

N.T. Professor Kuzin, what was the aim of the forum of Nobel Peace Prize winners in Paris, and who took part in it?

M. Kusin. This was the first time ever that such a gathering had been organized. Invitations were sent to both individual scientists and organizations that had been awarded the prize, as, for instance, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, as well as to organizations actively working for peace, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, UNESCO and a number of others. The initiative for holding such a meeting came from the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, headed by the well-known American writer Elie Wiesel, and President Mitterrand of France. The choice of venue for the meeting was in my opinion largely prompted by Elie Wiesel's personal love for France, his many professional and friendly ties. I need only mention that he is a graduate of the Sorbonne.

The participants in the conference were divided into working groups, each with its own problems. For instance, "disarmament and development," "disarmament, economics and development," "science, technology and development," "culture," and a number of others. The chairmen of the groups were for the most part Swedish scientists, members of the Nobel Committee. As for the aim of the conference, I would sum it up briefly as a search for and discussion of ways of ensuring peace in the world on the threshold of the 21st century.

N.T. What were the discussions like? Was there more searching for points in common, or mutual recriminating?

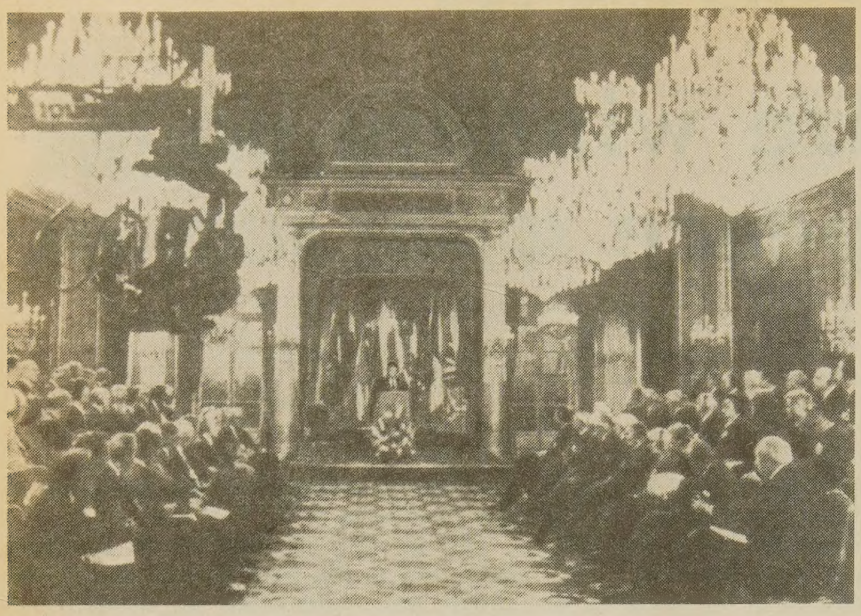
M.K. I would describe it as a discussion or exchange of views between reasonable people. There was a complete absence of elements of confrontation. Each of the working groups discussed the purely humanitarian, or to be more precise, humanistic problems facing the world. That was the tone set at the very outset of the conference by Elie Wiesel and President Mitterrand.

The 20th century produced the atom bomb, and two world wars that cost more than 50 million human lives. It is also the age of constant local conflicts and increased religious hostility and intolerance, the age of an unrestrained increase in hunger and the arms drive, the age of rampant terrorism and man's conquest of space. All countries and peoples are entangled in this knot of contradictions, which cannot of course be cut by the nuclear sword. According to estimates by Soviet scientists, if nuclear weapons are ever used, more than 300 million people on the European continent alone will perish, and those who survive will have nowhere to live because of radioactive contamination and global ecological disruption. And this assessment does not belong to the category of "I can scare you more than you can me."

N.T. Which speeches did you find most interesting?

M.K. Perhaps for subjective reasons I was most impressed by the speech of the Nigerian writer and Nobel prize winner Wole Soyinka, who spoke with great sincerity and pain of the problems of the so-called Third World. What struck me in his speech was his observation that religion, which claims to bring man calm and serenity, to teach him to accept the world around him and its problems philosophically, is at times the cause of inhuman enmity leading to bloodshed and genocide.

Nationalistic fanaticism, religious intole-



President Mitterrand welcoming the Nobel prize winners.
Photo from "L'Humanite"

rance and chauvinism are distracting the population in the developing countries from tackling their most vital problems: ensuring sufficient food, improving the quality of medical aid, fighting drought and infectious diseases. Moreover, the developing countries have also found themselves drawn into the arms race, thereby wasting already inadequate funds. The message of Soyinka's speech was that mankind must stop without delay and rethink its course.

Personally, I found the speech by the American biochemist Rosalyn Yalow very interesting. What had first been met with indifference, and even disdain, has proved to be the plague of the 20th century. The consolidation of all efforts is required to combat AIDS, since lack of progress could lead to catastrophic results!

Incidentally, I should like to point out, and not just because I'm a doctor, that all groups touched on the medical aspects of the problem under discussion. That is not surprising, as disease is caused by bad water and lack of elementary sanitation and hygiene; ecology also affects human health, as does the problem of survival on land with low fertility.

N.T. What conclusions were reached at the conference?

M.K. Let me make it clear straight away that no manifestos or resolutions were drawn up, and that we never set ourselves such a task. There were about eighty of us, and from our point of view it would have been unethical to speak on behalf of world science. But we did draw up certain recommendations for governments. The scientists were all in full agreement that colossal efforts are needed to resolve the problems of our times. But we were all equally convinced that mankind must enter the 21st century in a non-violent world, without wars and conflicts.

I wouldn't say that everything at the conference went smoothly. For instance, when we discussed the recommendation that governments cut military spending by at least 20 per cent and use the funds thus released for aid to the developing countries, sceptical voices were heard saying that even if such a recommendation were adopted, it would be impossible to verify its implementation.

The developing countries account for the majority of the world population, yet for some reason they are known as the Third World. There are not three worlds - there is only one, and an indivisible one at that! The developed countries have more than enough money and technical and scientific facilities to help their less well-endowed fellow human beings. Common sense and good will must prevail between peoples and countries with different religions and social systems.

N.T. How do you see the modern scientist and his role in the contemporary world?

M.K. The image of the scientist as a hermit shut up in with his test tubes or busily dissecting frogs is a thing of the past. The test tubes and frogs still exist, but science today is absolutely different: it is a collective endeavour. The volume of information and the technical and practical levels attained require a collective approach.

A physician working on an effective treatment for burns is physically incapable of also being an expert on immunology or cell biology, yet without such knowledge he can make no progress. And furthermore, a real scientist is, as a rule, also a good leader. His position requires him to be not only a first-class professional in his field, but also I would say a professional in public activities. There can be no divorce between the two. A scientist's public and scientific positions are often interrelated, or even merged.

Incidentally, it is scientists who have played the principal role in dispelling the myth that local nuclear wars are safe and do not endanger neighbouring states. They have proved scientifically, with the full force of their prestige to back them, that such an approach to the most lethal of weapons that has ever existed is completely unfounded.

Interviewer: OLEG ZHUKOV

16 recommendations of the Paris meeting

1. All forms of life should be regarded as man's principal legacy. Therefore, any damage to the ecological balance is a crime against the future.

2. The human race is a single entity, and every individual belonging to it has the same right to liberty, equality and brotherhood.

3. The human race's wealth also lies in its diversity, and it should be protected in all its aspects: cultural, biological, philosophical and spiritual. To that end we must constantly repeat the need for tolerance, heed the views of others, and challenge undisputed truths.

4. The most important problems facing humanity today are universal and interdependent.

5. Science is power, and access to it should be ensured equally to all individuals and peoples.

6. The gap that exists in many countries between intellectuals and political power should be reduced. Each should recognize the role of the other.

7. The absolute priority of education should be reflected in the budgets of all countries, and education should promote the flourishing of all man's creative talents.

8. Science and technology should be available to all, as this would help the developing countries to determine their future and decide for themselves what knowledge is necessary for that future.

9. As TV and other new forms of mass media will be the principal means of

Keep the public informed

Our next interview is with Professor Georges Köhler (F.R.G.), Director of the Max Planck Institute of Immunology.

I imagined a Nobel prize winner somewhat differently. Instead of an elderly grey-haired man, I was faced with a man of about forty with a rather frivolous beard, wearing baggy trousers and a sweater. Professor Köhler is a man of action and is unused to talking airily about world problems.

N.T. Were you disappointed by the absence of any perceptible response to the Nobel meeting in your country?

G.K. No, I wasn't disappointed. Nor do I think the significance of the forum of Nobel prize winners should be exaggerated. The response it received was what I think it deserved.

N.T. Some people say that the conference was part of President Mitterrand's election campaign.

G.K. That could be partly the case. But it's not the whole story.

N.T. Can scientists come up in three days with something better than all the rest of us together have produced in recent years?

G.K. Of course not, but that doesn't mean such gatherings are unnecessary. The very fact that busy scientists found the time to think together about peace, disarmament, and the coming century is in itself worthy of attention. The Paris meeting was a gesture, a demonstration of the political will of scientists who have won well-deserved awards. Incidentally, few people believed that so many would go to Paris - 75 of the 200 invited.

N.T. Leaving aside the election and publicity aspect, what was actually discussed?

G.K. Look at the agenda. First there was a plenary meeting chaired by president Mitterrand and Elie Wiesel. Then we split up into groups according to interests and fields of research. I took part in the discussions of the science, technology and development group. We exchanged experiences, ideas and theories.

N.T. Judging from press reports, newsmen were excluded from these discussions. Why?

G.K. I think that was right. The scientists felt much freer in their discussions of controversial issues without the presence of journalists. But even then the French press and TV reported the proceedings sufficiently extensively. So the public - at least the French public - was well informed.

N.T. You mentioned "controversial issues." Does that mean that there were some really heated debates in Paris?

G.K. There may have been in other groups, but in mine there were almost none. And that isn't good. In accordance with the arrangements made by the organizers, in our group there were chemists, biologists, physicists and physicians. So when a physicist was outlining his theory, three quarters of those present didn't understand what he was talking about. So how could there be any arguments? Obviously we shouldn't have all been lumped together.

N.T. At the Paris meeting, President Mitterrand described the 20th century as the century of Auschwitz and penicillin. How do you see the prospects for scientific development?

G.K. I see them as good. Scientific research makes it possible to resolve the problems facing mankind.

N.T. But it also creates new ones.

G.K. True, that has always been the case and will always be. You have to face the facts. Science and technology can help cope with today's difficulties, but they will inevitably produce others about which we now know absolutely nothing. Today's success could turn out to be tomorrow's problem, if not tragedy. But that doesn't mean it's better to sit and do nothing. There is no alternative if progress is to be made. Science and technology have to be advanced.

N.T. And what role do you think scientists can play in preserving peace and improving East-West relations?

G.K. I don't regard scientists as chosen people in this respect. But they probably react less emotionally to things. So I believe that you could sum up their role as follows: for stable peace to be preserved what is required are trust, openness, and readiness to show what is happening in your country, and that's where scientists can help - they can look at what research is being done and where.

N.T. Visit nuclear testing grounds...

G.K. Yes. In order to stop seeing each other as potential aggressors, openness is essential, and that's where scientists come in.

N.T. I hope you'll excuse me for a rather unorthodox question. Do you think scientists could govern the world?

G.K. I don't think so. Being a scientist is only one of the many professions open to people, and it would be a mistake to give government powers to any one profession.

N.T. Does your institute maintain contacts with Soviet research organizations?

G.K. Yes, but they can't be described as extensive.

N.T. Would you like to see them increased?

G.K. It's hard to judge. I know very little about what Soviet scientists are working on. They should publish more of their papers in international scientific journals. On the whole, I would say Soviet biology has some catching up to do. Its level today lags behind the highest international standards. For fruitful scientific exchanges openness is the first priority. The word "confidential" should disappear from scientific papers.

N.T. You received the 1984 Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine. For what specific discovery?

G.K. For a method of producing molecular antibodies. In the past they could only be obtained in an organism. My method has made it possible to obtain them in an artificial medium.

NIKITA ZHOLKVER,
our own correspondent
Freiburg - Bonn

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education in the future, education should inculcate a critical attitude to the information provided by these media.

10. Education, nutrition and the prevention of disease is the main tool in demographic policy and reducing child mortality. Specifically, universal vaccination using existing and future vaccines should be the shared responsibility of scientists and politicians.

11. All scientific research on the prevention and treatment of AIDS should be encouraged, not hindered, and conducted jointly, not separately, specifically, through cooperation within the pharmaceutical industry. As soon as a vaccine is obtained, it must receive the guarantee of the authorities.

12. The development of molecular biology should be encouraged, as its recent achievements give grounds for hope of substantial medical progress and the identification of the genetic causes of certain diseases, which would help prevent and possibly find a cure for them.

13. Disarmament would give a considerable impetus to economic and social development, because today the armaments industry eats up a substantial proportion of the world's limited resources.

14. We insist on the holding of an international conference for the all-round discussion of the Third World's debts, which are restricting its economic and political advancement.

15. Governments should assume an unambiguous and legally binding obligation to respect human rights and abide by the agreements they have signed.

16. Another conference of Nobel prize winners will be held in two years' time to examine these problems. In the intervening period, groups of prize winners will, when necessary, visit countries and regions where man's rights are threatened (for example, five Nobel prize winners could visit Bhopal or Chernobyl).

In the home stretch

GALINA SIDOROVA

Changes and contradictions in the 40th President

Ronald Reagan has started the last lap of his presidency. The final year of his presidency began with his eighth and last State of the Union message to Congress, delivered at the end of January. The President began by saying that he had no intention of talking about achievements. However, he did stop to speak of them. This is understandable. Ronald Reagan hopes to cross the finishing line on a wave of success. He noted what he described as the positive shifts in the economy and the development of trade. He described the Soviet-U.S. INF treaty as an unprecedented achievement in arms reduction. He assured his fellow-countrymen that an agreement on a 50-per cent cut in the strategic arms of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. was within reach.

President Reagan has not yet finished playing the main role in his political career. But certain lessons of his presidency are already being studied by those who shortly have to stand the first test in the 1988 marathon election campaign. And they are not the only ones. We too are looking back on the past 7 years, for in our common world much depends for us too on the domestic political situation in the United States and on how, as a result, Soviet-American relations develop.

Summing up some of the results, I should like to return to the very beginning. Ronald Reagan. An actor turned politician, and something of a political actor. A man who came to power as a fierce opponent of arms control, as was obvious from his first State of the Union message. A man with a limited understanding of the underlying connection between world problems, who spoke with the voice of the extreme right. A man, who in the name of God called for a crusade against communism and made ideological fanaticism the basis of his country's policy. That was the image we received of the 40th President of the United States.

The invasion of Grenada and the air raid on Libya that followed were an embodiment of the policy proclaimed in the first message with all its concomitants: an outburst of chauvinism, intoxication with overpowering might, the flexing of military muscles. True, muscle-flexing sometimes gave way to misgivings.

Disillusionment was in store for the President. His popularity fell off sharply when he spoke at the nazi cemetery in Bitburg, and subsequently as a result of the Irangate scandal and economic troubles.

We who specialize in American studies were full of the gloomiest predictions as to where the Washington policy and the programme for strategic rearmament could lead. Some were given to forecasting with malicious glee the inevitable crash of the Reagan economy.

What do we see now? Economic difficulties exist. But they have not brought about a crash. Unemployment is at its lowest level for eight years, although in my eyes 7 million jobless means a great number of human tragedies. Everything is comparative. The budget deficits have been reduced somewhat by keeping military spending at its present level, and some cuts in the allocations for maintenance of the state apparatus and social services. Profits of corporations have reached a record level for the past 15 years. Even the stock market crash on that Black Monday of October 19, 1987, did not bring the predicted consequences. That is one side of the picture.

The other is that America is learning to live as a debtor, adjusting its economic mechanism to what is for it a thoroughly unusual situation - not dependence on what it produces itself, but on its Japanese and West European creditors. A sort of mutual penetration of economies is taking place, and this has affected America's policies. Uncle Sam himself is now trying to shrug off some of the burden of responsibility for the Western half of mankind.

I remember trying two years ago to find out what Americans thought of the increased mutual dependence of the present-day world. Most reacted negatively to the very concept of mutual dependence, of the United States being dependent on anyone. Today the Americans themselves speak of mutual dependence, nor is this confined to the economic field.

The recognition of mutual dependence and America's slow and painful turn towards the rest of the world is, in my view, one of the main outcomes of the Reagan presidency. This shift cannot, I believe, be viewed in isolation from a similar shift in our country. Both we and they are changing. In our country, this recognition of mutual influence has been manifested in a new policy, in a non-traditional approach to our partner-cum- rival. We are learning to understand each other as we really are, realizing that our interests lie in the stability and predictability of the domestic policies of our countries.

Reagan has not altered his convictions, as is evident from his persistence in seeking to make funds available to the Nicaraguan contras. We shall probably hear again of support for the Afghan mujahedeens and of more military programmes. But experience has given the President greater realism in certain extremely important issues, and resulted in his administration moving closer to the political centre.

According to the polls, some 60 per cent of all Americans approve of President Reagan's efforts. That is something of a record for the whole postwar period. And they approve largely because he has moved towards reducing international tension and seeking ways of cooperation and dialogue with the Soviet Union. That is a lesson to all of us, as well as to the man who will move into the White House as the 41st President.

Whither Taiwan?

The funeral of Jiang Jingguo, head of the Guomindang regime and son of Chang Kaishi, took place in Taibei on January 30.

The death of 78-year-old Jiang Jingguo came as no surprise, as he was seriously ill. It had been expected in Taiwan, as well as in Peking and Washington, which are particularly concerned about the island's future. Nevertheless, the decease of the Guomindang leader has raised many questions, the chief of them being what future awaits Taiwan.

This is by no means an idle question. Jiang Jingguo has left a multifarious legacy. Nothing seems to portend problems in the economy. Taiwan has achieved perceptible success in expanding its productive forces, and a leading position in the economic, scientific and technological fields.

Together with Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong, the island constitutes a group of "new industrial states." In some fields they are beginning to challenge even such giants as the United States and Japan. The Asian "new industrial states" are known as "dragons" or "tigers" which are proving difficult to rival.

For the last ten years the average annual growth rate of Taiwan's gross national product has been around 10 per cent (10.7 per cent in 1987). Modern electronics, radio engineering, optics, precision machine building, instrument making, organic chemistry, the automobile industry and shipbuilding have been set up in the island.

Taiwan's export turnover has exceeded 30 billion U.S. dollars, placing the island among the 15 major trading nations. Considerable progress has been made in the social field.

There are of course problems in Taiwan's economy, but the overriding problem is the uncertain political future.

The island is a part of China. In 1949 the routed Guomindang army fled there. The Guomindang party had ruled the country for a long time. But eventually the Chinese, led by the Communist Party, overthrew it and established a people's republic. The Guomindang's supporters ensconsed themselves in Taiwan and threatened to return to the mainland. They enjoy the support of the United States, which recognized their regime as the "government of China" and generously supplied Taibei with arms. For three decades the situation in the Taiwan Strait remained complex and explosive.

In the late 1970s Beijing placed the emphasis on a peaceful settlement of its differences with Taibei. The Communist Party and the Guomindang have cooperated twice in the past - in the 1920s, during the struggle for a bourgeois democratic republic in China, and in the 1930s and 1940s, during the war against the Japanese invaders. In the late 1970s the Communist Party called on the Guomindang to resume cooperation with the aim of reunifying the Chinese nation.

Beijing fully realizes that reunification of Taiwan with the mainland is not an easy matter. And this is not entirely due to old antagonisms and present mistrust. The most important factor is that China is a socialist state, while Taiwan is capitalist. How are these incompatible systems to be united?

Beijing found a way out by advancing the principle of "one state - two systems" as the basis for reunification. Concrete and seductive proposals have been made to Taibei. The present economic and political system would continue on the island for at least 50 years after reunification, and no troops or administrative personnel would be sent from mainland China to Taiwan.

The attractiveness of these proposals is increased by the current reforms aimed at doing away with administrative methods of economic management and encouraging contacts with foreign private business. Taiwan businessmen already have the opportunity to establish close cooperation with their compatriots on the mainland.

There has been no official reaction to Beijing's proposals. Nevertheless, Jiang Jingguo had begun to loosen the screws, moderating his once irreconcilable stand. Through Hong Kong and Singapore, Taiwan firms have entered into business contacts with trade organizations in the People's Republic of China. Mutually advantageous trade is expanding rapidly. According to some data, it exceeded 1.5 billion dollars last year. Taiwan businessmen have also made investments on the mainland.

At the end of 1987, Jiang Jingguo made another compromise with Beijing. He allowed the islanders to visit their relatives in China, and about 20,000 of them have already done so. In the same year, Jiang Jingguo lifted the ban on opposition parties, relaxed control over the press, and introduced some other measures towards democratizing his regime.

All this should have inspired optimism. Beijing appreciated positive trends in Guomindang policy and after the death of Jiang Jingguo stressed that it would like to continue the dialogue with Taibei, and hopes for the early peaceful reunification of the homeland. However, there are grounds for regretting the failure to achieve greater progress while Jiang Jingguo was alive.

Jiang Jingguo belonged to the Guomindang old guard, which believes that Taiwan is still part of China. Some members of the old guard take a softer line with regard to Beijing, and they approved of Jingguo's steps towards rapprochement. But others have resisted any soft-pedalling in relations with the Communists. Nevertheless, all share the idea that China is indivisible.

Taiwan coastguard patrol.
From Der Spiegel (F.R.G.)

At the same time, however, the majority of the Taiwan population are island-born, and their emotional ties with the mainland are much weaker. Some of them even think that Taiwan should be proclaimed an independent state. Separatist propaganda is banned in the ruling Guomindang party, whereas the opposition is talking almost openly about it.

Will the new Taiwan president, Li Denghui, be able to restrain the separatists? It is said that he is far from being as strong a man as his predecessor, Jiang Jingguo. The present Guomindang leader has no powerful backing in the Taiwan establishment. Moreover, Li Denghui, who is island-born, has never been to the mainland.

Furthermore, the scramble for power is not unlikely to begin in the highest echelons of the Guomindang party. Judging from reports by foreign news agencies, the president could be challenged by Hao Baijun, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Lin Yanggang, former Minister of the Interior, and others. In any case, a whole group of the Guomindang's leading figures will now be involved in making important political decisions.

More likely than not they will not allow separatist tendencies to prevail. To do so would mean political suicide for Taiwan, as it would be unacceptable to Beijing. It would not be advantageous to the United States either, as any aggravation of the situation in the Taiwan Strait could have unpredictable consequences for Sino-American relations.

There is another danger. Some Guomindang leaders criticized Jiang Jingguo for his attempts to democratize the regime and his "de-freeze" acquiescence to the establishment of unofficial ties with China, but they did not dare oppose him. But today they may decide to act. This is certain to destabilize the situation on the island and is likely to create renewed tension in the Taiwan Strait.

The course of events also depends greatly on Washington's stand. On the one hand, it is against open separatism in Taiwan. But, on the other, it is not at all interested in the reunification of the island with mainland China. Taiwan is an ideological ally of Washington, a frontline military outpost and a profitable economic partner. This explains why the White House wants to keep the island as a de facto independent political entity. It is prepared to tolerate the dialogue between Beijing and Taibei as long as it is unproductive. For this reason Washington is unwilling to approve the programme of reunification on the principle "one state - two systems" and is supplying large quantities of arms to the island. Tokyo also has contingency plans with regard to Taiwan.

Taiwan's future is therefore an equation with many unknown quantities.

EVGENY SEVASTYANOV

CYPRUS

TIME IS WORKING AGAINST ALL

From our special correspondent
VLADIMIR KULISTIKOV

At the gate of his villa my Nicosian acquaintance Panos displays the Greek national flag and a wooden cross. Together they symbolize his grievance against the Turkish Cypriot community. "They brought Attila to the island," he bitterly explains.

Attila is the 30,000-strong Turkish expeditionary force which has occupied the northern part of Cyprus, along with the 50,000 Anatolian settlers who have taken over the homes left vacant by Greek Cypriot refugees.

Though Panos is himself a refugee, his home in Famagusta, once bustling but now almost a ghost town, is empty. Every year Panos and both his sons leave the capital in their Honda for the day to head eastward. From a hill near the Green Line that divides the island there is a good view of the deserted areas. Panos usually looks at the windows of his house through a pair of field glasses. Though his new home is more comfortable, the sight of his old house disturbs him deeply.

Panos has decided not to vote in the presidential elections, the first round of which has been scheduled for February 14. None of the candidates is tough enough towards the Turks, he says. Extremism is not popular in a country with a per capita national income of close on 6,000 dollars, one of the world's lowest unemployment levels and one of its highest rates of consumption of such durables as videos and cars. Even the refugees cannot be considered unfortunate, as government aid programmes have provided them with jobs and housing.

The lesson of 1974

In principle, the extremist approach to resolving intercommunal strive by force was discredited back in July 1974. It is profoundly incompatible with Cypriot democratic traditions, forced as it was on the island from the outside and rejected by the Greek community. Thirteen years ago, inspired by the junta of black colonels that then ruled Greece, Eoka-B terrorists inflicted reprisals not only on the Turkish community, but also on all democrats, regardless of their ethnic origins. The Turkish expansionists took advantage of the nationalist putsch to occupy 38 per cent of the island on the pretext of saving the Turkish Cypriots.

Having failed to unravel the knot, the leaders of the putsch only made matters worse. To escape punishment they went into exile. Rank-and-file extremists aligned themselves with the right. Even conservatives believe the Turkish Cypriots' problems should be treated with understanding. As far as the left is concerned, they have never advocated communal segregation. As Ezekias Papaioannou, General Secretary of AKEL (the Progressive Party of Working People) said, his party was an organization of the whole of the Cypriot people of all workers, regardless of the ethnic group they belonged to.

Generally speaking, the Greek community has clearly learned the lesson of the tragic past. Several people in Nicosia told me that in former times Turkish Cypriots were often treated badly. Nonetheless, prejudice is persistent. "All Turkish Cypriots, even those on the left," one prominent politician told me, "are chauvinists. Their aim is to get Turkey to annex Cyprus. They don't want it to be a unified, independent state."

Games in a cage

In his New Year message, Rauf Denktas, leader of the Turkish community and "president of the Turkish Republic of

This glass figure stands near the old gates of Famagusta.

Northern Cyprus," advocated a peaceful and just solution of the Cyprus problem, acceptable to the whole of the people. He was even willing "to extend a hand of friendship" to the neighbouring Greek community. This statement can be regarded as lip service to please world public opinion, which has refused to accept the partitioning of the island. Rauf Denktas is doubtless eager to earn the reputation of a politician who favours an undivided Cyprus.Even the creation of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" and efforts to secure it formal international recognition look like an attempt to gain additional advantages in future intercommunal talks conducted from a position of strength. However, the degree of freedom the present Turkish Cypriot leaders are allowed is quite another matter.

Northern Cyprus is under occupation. The Turkish troops many Turkish Cypriots welcomed as defenders in 1974 have in fact become military police. Even the local police are largely controlled by the Turkish Peace Corps commander. In defiance of protocol, the "mother country's" mission in Lefkosha (the Turkish name for Nicosia) has effectively assumed the functions of the supreme authority.

In the north, living standards have drastically declined. The minimum wage is a fifth of that in the south, and Turkish refugees are far worse off than their Greek counterparts. The neo-Liberal programme encouraged by Turkey to improve the economy has reduced employment. Partial isolation from the outside world and the disruption of economic ties inside Cyprus have adversely affected entrepreneurs and financiers.

Colonial policies have fomented social tensions. It would be wrong to assume that the agreement "on the exchange of labour" (which has opened the doors to settlers from Turkey) was simply forced on the Turkish community by Ankara. It appears that the local administration hoped thereby to increase the size of the Turkish population of the island which remains, however, at 18 per cent. Having received land and obtained access to the benefits of a more developed civilization, the former sharecroppers and farm labourers from Anatolia have become staunch supporters of the occupation regime. They have a party of their own which, for the time being at least, supports the National Unity Party.

Experts say that Turkish settlers are a "demographic demolition bomb" designed to destroy Cyprus's distinctive culture, way of life, its industry, democratic political traditions and religious tolerance, i.e., everything that distinguishes Cyprus from Turkey. In December 1987 a "legal aid" agreement was signed, ostensibly to prevent Cyprus from becoming a haven for Turkish progressives.

Broad sections of the Turkish community cannot but feel anxiety when their compatriots emigrate to Britian, the U.S. and Australia. If the competition were fair, they would not have left their homes to the less enterprising immigrants. But the occupation authorities are on the side of the latter.

Protest on the part of the opposition has led to reprisals. "We are facing the threat of a dictatorship," Ozker Ozgür, leader of the Republican Turkish Party, observed with some justice in the weekly Yenidüzen at the end of 1987. A civil court imposed a fine of 200,000 dollars on him for criticizing Rauf Denktas. It is rumoured that he is to appear before a criminal court.

Voices behind the scenes

Isolation from their own people and mounting pressure from the "mother country" have effectively made it impossible for the Turkish Cypriot leaders to conduct responsible talks on their own and implement the agreements reached. They are being allowed less and less room for manoeuvre. It appears that mere dialogue between the communities will not help achieve a settlement. Takis Hadjidimitriou, general secretary of the influential EDEK party, said that today the problem can only be solved with the assistance of the entire international community.

Cyprus needs sound guarantees of territorial integrity, independence and respect for the interests of all ethnic groups. On January 21, 1986, the U.S.S.R. proposed that the question of guarantees should be resolved by an international conference. In addition to the Republic of Cyprus (represented by both communities), the permanent members of the Security Council, Greece, Turkey and several non-aligned nations could take part in such a conference. The aim would be not to force some sort of internal settlement on the Cypriots, but to examine the international aspects of the problem and pave the way for a free dialogue between the communities on equal terms in order to find a solution that would be acceptable to all.

In Cyprus I met political leaders representing various tendencies, and all of them expressed a high opinion of the Soviet initiative. And I hope this is not mere courtesy. As Charis Kiriakides, a prominent figure in the ruling Democratic Party, put it, the Soviet proposal offers support to those forces eager to guarantee a democratic future for a united and independent country. The circles that are

A Turkish patrol on the "Green Line" dividing the Greek and Turkish sectors of Nicosia.

anxious to align Cyprus with the West under the aegis of NATO are giving preference to intercommunal talks.

The U.S. even wanted to appoint a special envoy to mediate a settlement with the help of "shuttle diplomacy" on the island. The thrifty U.S. administration intended to economize the costs of the mediation mission from the funds Congress annually appropriates for aid to Greece and Turkey in a ratio of seven to ten. Though this is a minor detail, it reveals the desire to reduce the problem of Cyprus to the status of differences between Greece and Turkey - a major disagreement within the framework of NATO.

Both the South and the North rejected Washington's good offices. The people of Cyprus trust neither the U.S. nor NATO. In 1974, the West did not stop either the putschists or the occupation force. Neither do the Cypriots regard the present Western policies as sincere or open.

Take the question of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus." Officially, the Western countries only recognize the government of the Republic of Cyprus. Among other things, in 1987 the EEC signed a customs union agreement with it. A short while ago the press reported that several West European states intend to open offices in the North independently of their embassies in Nicosia. As Glafcos Clerides, leader of the Democratic Rally Party, put it, in its dealings with Cyprus the West behaves like a man who has a wife and a mistress. In the long run he deceives them both, makes them jealous and forces them to wait humbly for his attentions.

Had the West wished, it could have helped with the withdrawal of Turkish troops and the problem of the settlers. It has enough levers, such as military and economic aid, to persuade Ankara. It could have taken advantage of Turkey's desire to enter the Common Market. But its primary concern to strengthen NATO's southern flank outweighs all other considerations.

In addition, the U.S. is manipulating the problem of Cyprus in order to act as umpire in disputes between Turkey and Greece. Depending on the way the partners behave, it can encourage or restrain expansionism, and remain master of the situation.

The West has been trying to use Cyprus in NATO's interests. Such factors as intercommunal strife, foreign occupation and the influx of settlers have in a sense driven the issue of the British bases - 0.99 square miles of Crown possessions - into the background. It appears that it is not only the British that have been making use of bases and other military installations. For instance, the electronic intelligence centre on Mount Troodos - the highest peak in Cyprus - makes it possible to monitor the Middle East, Iran and part of the U.S.S.R. In the North, a runway has been built which, if necessary, can be used by military aircraft.

While there is still a chance

Western politicians prefer not to make a fuss about the problem of Cyprus. Mentioning it along with other regional conflicts is not to their advantage. Moscow cannot be blamed for it. They have been trying to persuade world public opinion that the problem is an internal NATO issue. For this reason they are unwilling to discuss it openly at international forums.

Addressing the 42nd session of the U.N. General Assembly, President Spyros Kyprianou proposed to demilitarize the territory of the Republic of Cyprus. However, the Western countries left his appeal unanswered. NATO circles have only been interfering with the mission of the U.N. Secretary-General to discharge its duties strictly in keeping with the mandate of the Security Council. A short while ago a British Foreign Office spokesman said there was an "alternative" plan for a settlement in Cyprus. Where was it discussed? None of the official representatives of the Republic of Cyprus was even informed of it.

The problem of Cyprus was not mentioned at the Washington summit. Despite this, the politicians I met said that since the meeting in Washington conditions for resolving the conflict had been more favourable. "I cherish no illusions," Georgios Vasiliou, an eminent economist and independent candidate for the presidency, told me. "The road to peace without weapons and violence will be a long one. Despite this, I am certain that future historians will regard the date on which the Soviet-American accords were signed as the dividing line between two epochs. The world has begun to change for the better, and in the long run these changes are bound to have a favourable effect on our region."

What should be done to achieve a settlement and get the country out of its blind alley in this respect? I would not say that this is the pivotal issue of the election campaign. On the one hand, the political parties have reached a consensus on general principles for a settlement (withdrawal of foreign troops, repatriation of the settlers, and establishment of a federal state). On the other, the electors' interest in the "problem of the impasse" has waned considerably. They are more concerned about economic and social policies since, according to some forecasts, the period of prosperity in the free part of Cyprus will soon end.

Such attitudes are a dangerous sign. Somehow, day-to-day worries have relegated partition to the background. There is a whole generation of politicians who are entirely oriented towards the Greek community. They have never worked with Turkish leaders. And this is not their fault. Yielding to pressure from Ankara, the Turkish Cypriot administration has been obstructing such contacts in every possible way. Spokesmen for the different communities are forced to meet far from the island.

Those concerned about the future of Cyprus must act without delay. Time is working against the country's unity, against the distinctive character of Cypriots - both Turks and Greeks. If the communities become segregated and the Green Line is turned into a national frontier, the country will ultimately lose its independence.

* * *

Before taking off for Moscow, I phoned Panos, my Nicosian acquaintance. His sons had refused to accompany him on the annual trip to the hill from which he viewed Famagusta, he told me sadly. His elder son did not like his father abusing the Turks. "Beyond the Green Line there are refugees and Cypriots just like us," he said.

Riposte

What's the idea, Le Monde?

In its February 2, 1988, issue, the French paper Le Monde carried the text of what it referred to as Boris Yeltsin's speech at the October plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee. The Central Committee informed us in this connection that he had said nothing of the kind at the plenary meeting. Consequently, this publication is nothing but a figment.

Curiously, the Editors of the paper have printed this text despite their own admitted doubts as to its authenticity.

M. Putinkovsky

The ascent to Victory

LEV BEZYMENSKY, New Times political analyst

■ I must admit that in photographs and on the screen I found the pathos and size of the monument almost alien. Then I found myself on top of Mamayev Hill as winter dawn was breaking. Below lay Volgograd, with its smoking factory chimneys and electric lights, yet what I seemed to see was Stalingrad, the city of the wartime years when I was young. It was indeed years, not yards, away. Now I appreciated the scope and scale of the sculptor's vision. Indeed, the Motherland Statue is here as much a component of the Volga landscape as the Battle of Stalingrad is an integral element of Soviet history. So when, deeply moved, one climbs the steps to the top, one seems to be making the ascent to Victory.

■ One would think that 45 years after the end of this great battle, our war wounds would have healed completely. However, time does not always close these wounds. Now and again it reopens them, especially on red-letter days. Only recently I received from Hamburg a clipping from a West German newspaper, an obituary notice of one Arthur Schmidt, a retired general who once served as chief of staff of the Sixth German Army. The accompanying brief note read: "This man survived his victims by 45 years." Truth to tell, hundreds of thousands of soldiers fell on this spot, some in their just and sacred struggle for their country's freedom, others in a strange land, unaware of what they were fighting for. All they had in common was their deaths.

We who survived and those born afterwards have additional duties and obligations to bear. Paramount among them is the obligation to look back at the past and try to understand what really happened. The Volga flows into the Caspian, we say in Russian, meaning that a thing is too obvious to be worth saying. What is less plain, however, is why the river also forms the line of demarcation on which the monument stands.

■ Hitler's war plans set the objective of advancing to the A-A (Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan) line, in short the Volga. Stalingrad was often mentioned in 1941 and again in 1942, when the Wehrmacht was drafting operations on the Eastern Front for spring and summer. Moreover, the fact that this city on the Volga was named after Stalin greatly irked the Fuehrer, as did the name of Leningrad, which he preferred to call St. Petersburg. The taking of Stalingrad was seen as taken for granted. "We are there," Hitler declared in a speech in Munich on November 8, 1942 - which I myself heard while serving in a radio intelligence unit.

But again, we ask: Why the Volga? I believe that that is a question we must ask ourselves again and again, though not with the bitter fury with which we silently asked it in the summer and autumn of 1942. To depict history in its true light we must necessarily analyze those situations which in wartime were rightly regarded as taboo. The Soviet Army's retreat to Stalingrad was all the more bitter as it occurred not in 1941 but in 1942, after the Battle of Moscow, whose significance as a turn in the tide was not disputed even on "the other side." In fact I heard Field Marshal Keitel, Chief of Staff of the German High Command, personally admit that after the Battle of Moscow, he had lost hope of winning the war. Nevertheless, the Soviet retreat was a hard fact.

Today the consensus is that the Battle of Moscow put paid to the Blitzkrieg. It wrecked the scheme to inflict a lightning defeat on the Soviet Union as early as August-September 1941 - when there was still nothing of the mud or frost that German generals are so given to blaming in their memoirs. The Blitzkrieg was finally interned on the Volokolamsk Highway. It was over. However, another war had begun, a long drawn-out war with laws of its own. I am not the

Winning both - the lightning and the protracted wars

author of this thesis. But I would like to observe that in the war known in this country as the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Union actually won two wars - the lightning war and the protracted war that came after.

■ Indeed, analyze the situation for yourselves. According to official statistics, when the nazis attacked the Soviet Union, its Armed Forces had upwards of 5 million men, of which number 2.6 million were stationed near the borders. Yet recall the tremendous losses sustained at the start of war! As many as 3.3 million were taken prisoner - this is the figure given by the logistics division of the General Staff of German Ground Forces in its confidential report No. 1/6562/41 of December 25, 1941. How many more were killed or reported missing! How many more broke through from the huge traps outside Minsk, Smolensk and Vyazma!

The losses were made good, with the Soviet Supreme Command continually supplying the front lines with more men and materiel. However, many of these men, inexperienced and inadequately equipped, sometimes found themselves immediately at the mercy of the blows struck by the powerful nazi units. Though the full history of these grim and bitter months has yet to be written, the outcome was that the Red Army ended the Blitzkrieg at a high price,

which, nevertheless, the Soviet people were willing to pay.

■ Alas, this was not enough. We realized that we had to learn to win not only a lightning war, but also a protracted war. The summer of 1942 found the warring sides in a new situation, one that could hardly be compared with that of 1941. Though the Wehrmacht had lost many of its initial advantages, its men stood deep inside Soviet territory. They held Byelorussia, the Ukraine and part of the Russian Federation. When June 28, 1942, dawned, everything seemed to start again: our miscalculations in defining enemy plans, the bitter days of retreat, and the rapid panzer advance along the Don River and into the Caucasus. Stalin issued that famous Order No. 227: "Not one step back!" Indeed, further retreat would have spelled disaster.

Today we know that Hitler's plans for 1942 were as ambitious as his plans for 1941. Much was expected of the blow to be struck this time in only one direction, southward. It was seen as a decisive breakthrough to the Middle East via the Caucasus. In June 1942 the Ost masterplan for colonizing Russian territory and killing off millions of Slavs, anywhere from 31 to 41 million initially, was drafted. At the start of 1942 the Wannsee Plan to "purge" all of Europe of Jews was also finalized. Plans were also elaborated for Asia, for Africa, even for America. However, the triumphant mood at the Reich's chancellory was premature. Slowly and then more rapidly the turn of the tide was reached in the summer campaign which dragged on into the autumn and winter.

What was the difference between this turn of the tide at Stalingrad and the other turn of the tide outside Moscow? Whereas near Moscow everything happened continuously, without an adequate breather for a counteroffensive, in 1942 the Soviet Army had built up a potential in advance, mustered its reserves and deployed them in line with the Supreme Command's strategy. The second factor was that by the autumn of 1942 the Soviet wartime economy had started up again at full blast, after the historically unprecedented eastward relocation of the war industry.

Neither Hitler, nor Paulus had anticipated that. As I remember, when questioned at the hamlet of Zavarygin on February 2, 1943, the captured Field Marshal stated categorically that he had never expected a Soviet offensive on so massive a scale. The Soviet generals in attendance, were delighted with this recognition of their skill in mobilizing their forces in secret. That was not their only achievement, though. The Stalingrad offensivie again and again furnished graphic evidence of the enemy's inability to assess and comprehend the profound meaning, indeed the very character of the conflict. He failed to realize that he was dealing with the army of a socialist state, with a socialist war economy, and with the Soviet people. He did not realize that either at Moscow or at Stalingrad.

To this day there are some, I might add, who appear reluctant to realize that.

■ The victory at Stalingrad had unquestionable worldwide repercussions. Moreover, it was a major international factor serving to strengthen the anti-Hitler coalition to an exceptional extent. The sword presented to Stalingrad in Teheran on behalf of King George was more than a token of gratitude. After Stalingrad, even Western politicians who in their hearts had doubted the outcome of the fighting on the distant plains of Russia became aware of the Soviet Union's role and might. This coincided with the first Allied victories in North Africa, although there the scale was different and the offensive was undertaken in a "colonial periphery." However, what had matured was an overall advance to combined strategy, resulting in joint decisions.

True, in this contradictory world of ours, Stalingrad had an unexpected consequence in that the German military and political elite thought it might be high time to seek a compromise with the West, mindful of the old anti-communist traditions of U.S. and British policy. In these two countries, too, the advocates of such traditions, alarmed by the Soviet Union's mounting authority and prestige, now reared their heads. Though this is a point one would perhaps prefer not to mention it must be emphasized today.

Meanwhile the Soviet soldier, who had won the Battle of Stalingrad and was continuing his uphill war, had uppermost in mind the sole desire to defeat the enemy, liberate his country and secure peace. He still had many steps to climb to V-Day, each of which could be the last for him and his companions. Nonetheless, the ascent continued.

We must have Remembrance Day

Though the snowswept Volga fields seem to radiate a quietness, in our hearts we want the homage rendered to the heroic wardead not to be a quietly formal act. Today, more and more often we say that besides V-Day, we must also institute a Remembrance Day, a Day of Mourning our wardead. There was a time when the Soviet people had a day of mourning, January 21, when we remembered Lenin, who died on that day in 1924. However, it ceased to exist. Let us not dispute old decisions. Rather let us think of new ones, laying greater emphasis on the Soviet people's memory of wartime heroism. The dead are dead, and nothing can bring them back. It is for the living to go on living.

Such are the thoughts that come to mind on this 45th anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad, which has coincided with an exciting chapter in renewal of the Soviet system, a tempestuous time of advance to the reliable and lasting peace that the victors of Stalingrad and their heirs so richly deserve.

Learning the art of free discussion

VITALY GANUSHKIN

Informal youth groups at the crossroads

Our now innumerable informal groups are in fact cooperatives, except that they produce (or claim to produce, at any rate) spiritual rather than material values. Even if the question is one of, for example, preserving the relics of our history, the material side of the matter recedes into the background, a given group's chief concern being to arrive at, or maintain, unanimity with regard to the underlying idea.

So far so good, but talking of ideas...

Most of the thousands of organizations that have struck out on their own are of a constructive nature - judging from their declared points of departure, at any rate. For instance, youth initiative funds are pursuing objectives very similar to those of the Komsomol, and call themselves informal for the sole reason of protecting themselves from the formalism which the Komsomol is now afflicted with (as it grudgingly admitted at its latest Congress). Falling within the same class are environmental protection and monument conservation groups, charity funds, and many others. Conceptually, they range from city courtyard conservationists to "hard rock" enthusiasts. There seems to be nothing wrong with them, so let them associate with each other and do as much good as they can.

But what about groups like the "gopniks" or "patsani," brought together by a common penchant for underworld lore? Like "stilyagi," "rokeri" and sports "fans," who delight in burning incense to dubious idols? "Dofenists," whose name derives from the Russian slang expression "do feni," meaning "who cares"? What are they after, and why?

As such, the emergence of informal organizations is a symptom of democratization and is, therefore, quite natural. But does our society really have to pay such high "overhead expenses" on democratization as these effectively useless youths and girls whose very uselessness has brought them together? Western democracy leaves everyone free to hit rock bottom, but what about ours, especially as it is today? Can our democracy afford such "freedom"? If yes, then not a few people may lose whatever they have gained from socialism.

The point is that all sorts of idol-worshippers are just mixed-up kids who have lost their bearings in the whirlwind of perestroika. But there are "informals" of a different kind who won't settle for less than deciding the destiny of the nation. They make incendiary speeches to alert those who care to listen to the threat emanating from the "enemy within" - a threat equal in its ruinous implications only to that of a nuclear holocaust, they aver.

In medieval Russia, all major political and social questions were submitted to the Vetche, or market-square gathering of townsfolk, for open discussion - a tradition undeservedly abandoned. Now, centuries later, there are signs of this tradition coming back in the seventieth year of Soviet power. You must agree that it is somewhat audacious of a group, even in a period of democratization, to call itself Vetche - a name that imposes a great responsibility. All the more so as the members of this group (which they describe as historico-patriotic), now functioning in the Academic Town of Novosibirsk, have arrived at it stage-by-stage, upon much reflection. Starting with Trezvost (Sobriety), they proceeded to Pamyat (Memory) to end up as Vetche. Their idea was to open our eyes to a hostile conspiracy.

Their colleagues - the leaders of certain other informal groups of a similar kind - go to the lengths of demanding de-ideologization and, in the long run, a change of regime. In fact, they are ringing the tocsin.

These "braves" are comparatively few so far, but they take advantage of informal groups being a legitimate form of democratization and glasnost, and claim leadership of these groups. What we have here is not merely one of the negative trends some informal groups have developed. Democracy is all very fine, but after all we have agreed to put forward and uphold alternative ways and means of transforming our society by ridding the organism of rotten teeth, and not the other way round.

We have agreed on that all right, but it looks as if certain circles are not in a hurry to observe this agreement. On the periphery of perestroika, there is often no one to draw the line of demarcation between genuine socio-political activity on the part of most members of informal groups, inspired by revolutionary reforms, on the one hand, - and, on the other, the political extremism and demagogy of those who claim public attention for purposes obviously other than constructive. Besides the processes under way in real life take time to spread to the outlying regions of the country.

Many Party and Komsomol organizations haven't so far found approaches to informal groups that are adequate to the qualitatively new conditions of democratization. Ideological workers - including propagandists and lecturers - have proved unprepared to use the more sophisticated methods called for by the new conditions. Experts in social sciences remain silent. In short, having caused a democratic explosion, we have found ourselves exposed to intense radiation on the part of certain leaders of informal groups without the benefit of the appropriate protective gear.

In the meantime, leaders and speakers offering a most dubious interpretation of perestroika and, sometimes, of socialism itself, are increasingly getting the Vetche audience under their control. They are already finding their way into work collectives, currying favour with the young, and even matching disorganizing actions to their words. At their Vetches they do not as a rule receive an adequate rebuff. More often than not neither clever propagandists, scientists well-versed in the subjects under discussion, nor Party or Komsomol leaders are present.

The dialogue the country's ideological workers are to engage in is going to be unusual. The very climate of democracy and glasnost rules out procedures for adopting decisions by the overwhelming majority of votes and the arbitrary closing of debates. Now we shall have only reason, knowledge and conviction to fall back on. Do we have debaters equal to the new tasks? We certainly do, and we are mobilizing them - but they lack the proper basic training. On the agenda now is political instruction par excellence. We must acquire the art of free discussion and polemics, and learn to make out our case by convincing argument and oratory.

The discussion is under way, and what turn it will take depends on us.

COMPETENCE BEGINS IN SCHOOL

Interview with VICTOR TOMASHKEVICH, doctor of economics

There is a question the answers to which depend on the social standing of the person you are talking with, and the degree of interest he shows in perestroika and public affairs generally.

That question is why the Soviet education system should now be reformed.

A review of the answers will clearly show that most of the problems of our socio-economic and cultural development are rooted in secondary, vocational and further education.

School lays the foundations for the future competence or incompetence, optimal or inadequate qualifications of young people and engenders the overall mentality that is responsible for the average and sometimes low standards reached in the field of their choosing.

Everyone seems dissatisfied with the present education system. What is the main trouble with it? This question is discussed below in a talk with doctor of economics, Victor Tomashkevich, vice-principal of the U.S.S.R. State Committee for Labour's Refresher Training Institute.

N.T. We would like to discuss some aspects of the country's life directly connected with the reform of all systems of education - school, college and the economy. Let's start our talk with the main problem - what gives cause for concern in the education of boys and girls in general educational and technical schools?

V.T. Young people, who are generally considered the most energetic and mobile section of the population, have up till now been unable to participate actively in the educational process. They were assigned the role of "passive objects" whose only function was to assimilate and reproduce knowledge. Today, too, textbooks and teaching methods alike are primarily geared towards role-learning. In this way they are discouraged from studying independently, educating themselves and developing self-reliance. This is perhaps one of the main reasons why considerable numbers of young people direct their energies not towards mastering knowledge but towards activities that give the public cause for concern.

N.T. How can a necessary chore, by which I mean study, be made a deeply felt need?

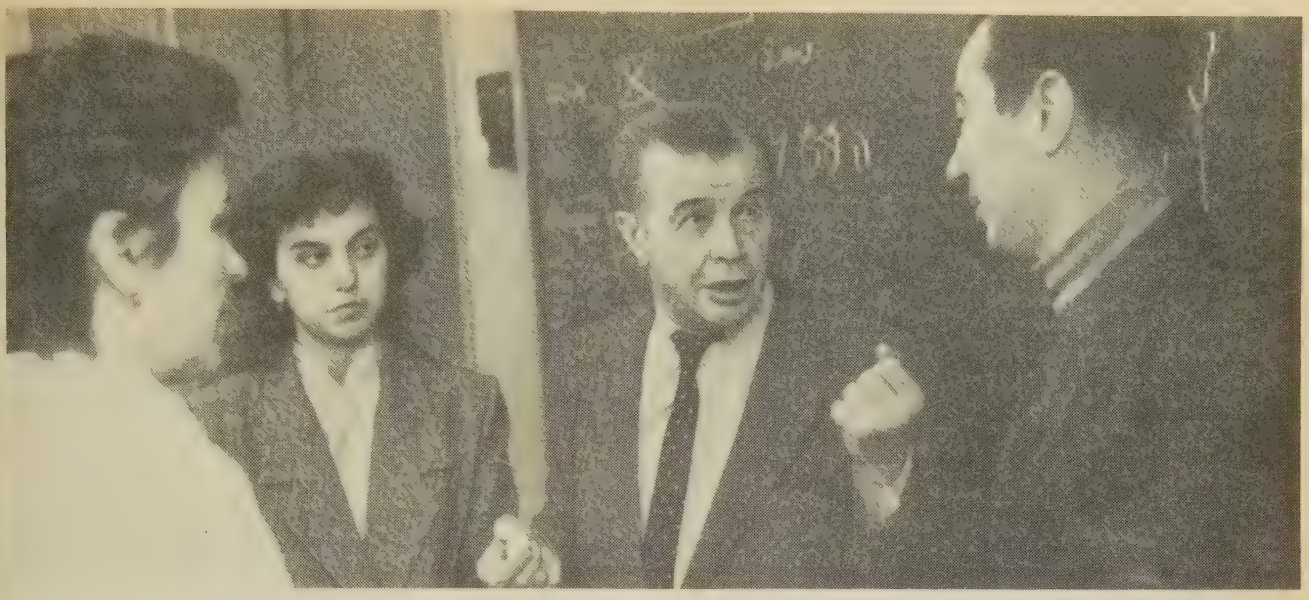
V.T. First of all, the forms of work of educational institutions should be radically changed, and general education and vocational training should begin earlier, in preschool institutions. For this purpose the knowledge children acquire in the first and second forms should be given to them at kindergartens, from the age of five or six, and they should receive secondary education in its present volume over a period of nine years. Secondary education will then be completed by the age of 15.

The intensity of instruction is one of the factors in the awakening of children's interest in knowledge. But it is only one of the many factors. The most important thing, I repeat, is to engage children in studies at an earlier age and for this purpose to make use of their incredibly capacious memory and keen interest in acquiring knowledge.

N.T. But a kindergarten doesn't seem an appropriate place at which to study.

V.T. This should not cause any difficulties. Every assistance can be given to kindergartens for this purpose, because the reform of general educational and vocational school begins with a revision of

In vocational schools young people can choose a profession that suits them.



Academician Alexei Bogomolov, head of the department of radiotechnical instruments at the Moscow Power Engineering Institute, with his students and staff.

their work. It is necessary to reduce the number of children in classes to eight or ten and to set a pay incentive for teachers who will work in kindergartens. Part of the expenditure could, I think, be covered by parents and part by the state, by reducing the training period by one year. Further education (from third year at the age of seven) could be continued in the existing schools.

N.T. Thus, young people complete secondary education by the age of 15. But they have to study for at least two more years to acquire a trade.

V.T. That's right. They get vocational or, rather, elementary vocational training, by the age of 17. Appropriate facilities are needed for this purpose. Part of the premises could be made available by ordinary schools. As for plant and the maintenance of staff, this could be provided by enterprises. Furthermore, it would be advisable to make enterprises pay for the labour force they receive.

N.T. How does the picture you've drawn fit in with the present administration of educational institutions?

V.T. With the approach I've just discussed, it would be expedient to merge the State Committee for Vocational Training and the Ministry of Higher Educational Establishments into a single body that could be named the State Committee for Continuous Vocational Training (this body would not include the Ministry of Public Education). The present technical schools and institutions of higher learning are, in my opinion, links and stages in vocational education, and logic suggests that they should be merged into a single chain.

N.T. Logic or science?

V.T. This is a very tricky point. The present style of running public education made teaching into, I'm not afraid to say, a servant of the administration. However paradoxical it may sound, teaching itself often stifled any educational creativity. Public education and vocational training seemed to develop in a bureaucratic shell. Democratic principles were atrophied, and the relationship between schools and superior bodies was one of instructions issued from above and information on what had been done supplied from below. In such circumstances report-padding, apathy and other evils were rempant while obedience and submission considered cardinal virtues in a school or college.

Here is one of the paradoxes of such a system. The various branches of the national economy, as the main consumers of the labour force, received it virtually free of charge. No wonder therefore that in their attitude to the labour force they were guided by the proverb, "never look a gift horse in the mouth." The system of patronage, established on orders from above, was regarded as burdensome by the enterprises, and by schools and colleges as an opportunity to ask for and get something from them.

N.T. What is the outcome of this divorce between the schools and the economy?

V.T. I would say between the economy and the schools. The loss of contact created a situation where all links in the chain of public education, vocational training and the economy began to develop in isolation from, and without complementing, one another. The discrepancy of interests between the economy and general and vocational education led to a steady decline in the quality of specialist training or, more exactly, in the training of specialists that were not needed by the economy.

In their turn, the planning bodies proved unable to coordinate the activities of producers and consumers, and the economic interests of both sides were not interconnected. Radical structural changes in general education and vocational training were not carried out, though they should have been effected long ago, and any change undertaken was, as a rule, of a cosmetic character. It is a deplorable fact that scientific and technological progress practically did not influence the teaching process and the training of personnel.

N.T. What do you mean by "continuous training"?

V.T. On completing elementary vocational education at the age of 17, some graduates will go to work in the economy, while others will continue their studies in the same institution. For this purpose they will have to take competitive examinations and get into the second stage of vocational education (at the level of the technical schools). After a year or eighteen months young people (at the age of 18 or 19) will receive specialized secondary education.

On completing the second stage, the graduates wishing to acquire higher vocational education will have to take competitive examinations again. Further studies will last two to three years, with priority given during this period to vocational polytechnical training.

I'm sure that the system of stages and competitive examinations would stimulate the influx of capable young people into higher education.

But let us return to the notion of "continuous education." Every worker has to improve his qualifications or possibly learn a new trade. Everyone must be ready

for this psychologically, as must society. That is why an extensive network of daytime and correspondence education and training courses is needed, so that everyone can get higher vocational education or an appropriate, and sometimes considerable, qualification increment.

The present methods of raising the skills of workers engaged in mass trades should be supplemented by schools or centres of high craftsmanship. They will not only help improve professional skills but also train first-class experts. The expediency of such a measure can be clearly seen in agriculture, where there are noticeable differences in professional skill and great differences in the efficiency of labour. The results achieved by distinguished machine operators Svetlichny and Pervitsky 20-25 years ago are still not available to most farmers. Not infrequently, advanced experience in an industry becomes obsolescent without having been assimilated. Experts must be trained purposefully. Schools to teach specialized skills need to be organized for this purpose in every district.

N.T. What you are talking about is essentially the state planning of raised professional standards. But our statistics assert that there are no problems in this field.

V.T. Indeed, according to our statistics, the Soviet Union is the country with the world's highest standard of education and professional skills. There seems to be nothing to worry about. Of the 130 million people employed in the economy, more than 50 million take advanced training courses every year. That is not bad, and we can apparently be satisfied.

But public opinion has a different point of view. Conscious of the real state of affairs, it is highly critical of the level of professional training in the country, and not without grounds. Let us turn to the press, which carries many facts that indicate an irresponsible attitude to the matter.

We are all tired of people having inadequate qualifications. Let turn again to the facts. Our workers attain high professional skills five to seven years later than in Sweden. Not long ago our scientists, using 17 criteria, assessed the professional standards of Leningrad engineers. Only a quarter of them rpoved to have a thorough grounding in their respective fields.

There is one more question to reflect on. It is often stressed how many inventors our country has. Indeed, there are five million of them. But I think that is a very small number, because over 130 million people are employed in the Soviet Union. In Japan, for instance, more than half of all workers make proposals for rationalization. It is time to moderate our enthusiasm and begin to remove the reasons for such a state of affairs in our country.

N.T. Could you indicate these causes?

V.T. With pleasure. The first, already known to us, is the standard of professional skill. Another reason is the red tape in the process of introducing innovations, the desire by hook or by crook to avoid paying the material reward of a rationalizer. Some cases brought by innovators have been in the courts for 20 years. At the end of last year the councils of the national organization of inventors inspected 26 ministries and departments and discovered 23,000 inventions that had not been put into practice.

The old wage system did not provide incentives for workers to raise their skills. It was not practically linked with workers' qualifications and did not stimulate efficient labour. The alternation of rushed and slack work and the diversion of personnel to other jobs equalized people in their practical activity and consequently led to wage levelling. As a result, many workers became indifferent to raising their skills.

N.T. The transition of the economy to intensive methods calls for a radical change in planning the labour force, and shifting the emphasis from quantitative to qualitative indices. The planning of qualifications is essentially the first link. In this connection it would be appropriate to recall once more that the workers' qualifications are the main factor in the growth of labour productivity. In the same way, the accumulation of skill and knowledge has always been considered the main way of increasing the wealth of society.

V.T. The capitalists understood that long ago and have been trying to do their best in this respect. The quality of the labour force is increasingly becoming the chief factor in competition. A higher quality of labour makes for a better quality of goods, the acceleration of scientific and technological progress and the use of its achievements in economic activity. For instance, 90 per cent of workers engaged in Japan's engineering industry have secondary education, while in a number of industries, especially in the companies producing machine tools with numerical programmed control, up to 60 per cent of workers have higher technical or university education.

Today the new labour force should be trained on the principles of planning formulated in the law on state enterprise (association). In this field, too, target figures, limits and standards should be set, orders made and contractual relations established.

N.T. Earlier we spoke of the need to pay for the training of manpower resources or, in other words, to build relations between the economy and education on a paying basis, on a system of contracts.

V.T. Contractual relations should, in my opinion, be formed not only between enterprises and colleges but also between enterprises and individual students. A student should be fully active in such relations. How can such relations be established? For instance, representatives of an enterprise could jointly with college teachers choose a group of students who satisfy their requirements and sign a contract with them.

It is quite possible and even desirable for a college to undertake additional obligations in the training of specialists under individual programmes as well.

Such a choice, I would even say selection, will help produce a more creative atmosphere among students and new forms of competition for the quality of studies, and increase the weight of a request for specialists. Furthermore, the ad hoc nature of the present job allocation of students will diminish.

N.T. You've mentioned a state order as one likely way of improving the training of specialists. Can this form of economic planning be applied in the sphere of education?

V.T. The fulfilment of state orders in the form defined in the law on state enterprise (association) is impossible without extending it to the training of personnel. An order can guarantee that organizations and enterprises, including and especially enterprises being built or put into operation, will be provided with the necessary personnel.

State orders for the training of specialists should preferably be placed on a competitive basis and included in the plan. Skilled workers and specialists can be invited by one or other enterprise from a whole number of educational institutions - colleges, technical and vocational schools teaching various specialities. As a matter of fact, it will be the living model of a future work collective.

The planning of qualifications and the provision of conditions for improving them raise the question of a new attitude to working time. At present people usually improve their skills after working hours. A strange situation arises: a new machine is devised during the working day and a new worker is trained outside his enterprise. I see a contradiction here. This explains why study at advanced training courses had a formal or cosmetic character.

Some believe that more working time means better economic results. This is an illusion. We should save not only on energy and raw materials but also on working time. The only thing we should not save on is the training of well-educated, efficient and enterprising personnel. ■

Private enterprise in Sofia

From our special correspondent
YURI SHEVCHENKO

Ten years - no brief span of time - have passed since my previous visit to Bulgaria. My first impression of Sofia on arrival this time was that the city looked both familiar and unfamiliar. As before, the pastel-shaded contours of Mt. Vitosha reared up on the horizon, but now high-rise buildings lined the road from the airport which, as I remembered it, had not been a city thoroughfare but a country lane bordered with wild-growing cherry trees.

Even more striking are the changes lying beneath the surface, beyond the externals. They are not immediately discernible, but one becomes increasingly aware of them on closer acquaintance with the life of the city - in the working collectives of factories, in the offices of the Associations (which have replaced but not duplicated the ministries), among the creative intelligentsia or in some commercial firm. Bulgaria has now entered a new phase of its economic and socio-political development. That phase is briefly defined in a word that is equally meaningful for the Soviet citizen and for the Bulgarian - perestroika.

I would include in the definition of this term, which stands for the complex and multiform processes under way in Bulgaria and which was the subject of broad discussion at the national Party Conference held in late January, another not altogether local phenomenon: the advent of a new figure in the forefront of the economic and social restructuring - the intelligent, determined, enterprising business executive.

This newcomer has two distinguishing features: 1) he is for the most part young, and 2) he has been elected, not appointed.

The economic council has the final say

I interviewed the new factory director Dimitr Bugatsevsky in his office (dark wood-panelled walls and leather upholstery). Dimitr,37, elegant and athletic, held this post for a year. He was wearing a well-tailored grey suit suggestive of Pierre Cardin (he had just returned from a business trip to France). Putting my perspicacity to the test, I asked:

"Dimitr, that suit of yours is Parisian in origin, isn't it?

Knitting his brows for a few seconds as he searched for the Bulgarian equivalent of the word "origin," he nodded his head (Bulgarian sign of negation) and showed me the "Vitosha" label on the lining of his jacket.

"It's our standard output. I bought it here in a shop."

The Vitosha factory Bugatsevsky heads produces men's and women's clothing. Moreover, it produces not only for the Bulgarian market but exports its goods to Canada, Denmark, West Germany and the United States. It has a contract with the French as well. The lion's share of its output goes to the socialist countries, primarily the Soviet Union.

The Vitosha factory, which is part of the Rila Amalgamation, has raised the prestige of Bulgarian-made clothes which are today gaining ground on the world market and has won a notable position in the CMEA countries. And undoubtedly with good reason.

"There is one reason, but a very weighty one," Dimitr said. "Enterprises in our industry have gone over to cost accounting. This has involved modernizing factories, buying up-to-date equipment, forming a new nucleus of executives each member of which was chosen on the competitive principle. All this could not but affect the quality of our output. But there is another angle. Whenever I mention it, my colleagues laugh at me for what they call 'waxing lyrical.' Perhaps. But I am convinced that the enhanced prestige of Bulgarian fashion is associated also with the innate aestheticism of my people. Their artistic taste. That is evident not only in the architecture of the famous Sofia churches and coastal fortress towns, but also in the traditional Bulgarian costume - the combination of white linen with gold-tinted leather, embroidery and fur. And today, thanks to the reform, we have an opportunity to demonstrate this taste to the full on an industrial level."

"You mean the economic reform?"

"Yes, I mean self-management, cost accounting, the right to take decisions independently and quickly. I mean the flexibility and mobility of an increasing number of light industry enterprises like our own, their new structure, geared to meeting market demand."

"What new structure?"

"A pyramid of self-managing links. Beginning with the work team, through the production line and factory department to the top management."

"You, then, are one of the self-management links?"

"Of course, although I cannot call myself an altogether independent component, one whose only duty it is to take decisions, in a word, to be the boss. I am a subordinate. I am doubly subordinate - to the Rila Amalgamation and to the economic council of my factory. The latter is the real boss."

"Could you tell me more about its functions?"

"With pleasure. The more so since I am the chairman of the council. It consists of representatives from all the departments of the factory. But our approach is not simply arithmetical. Each representative must be a specialist or at any rate well-versed in some particular sphere: production, planning, modelling, book-keeping, fashion trends, marketing, etc. By decision of the general meeting of the factory, the number of members of the council was set at 21. Eleven members, i.e., the majority, are ordinary workers. The rest are experts, administrators and top executives. The economic council and the director together run the factory from one general meeting to another."

"Don't you get in each other's way?"

"I don 't think this could happen in the context of cost accounting. After all, the director and the council have the same aims: namely, to produce as cheaply as possible, improve quality, renew equipment and increase profits. There are sometimes differences of opinion as regards the way to achieve these aims, but they are quickly ironed out in the course of discussion. We are all interested in organizing the production in the best possible way. That is what we are paid for."

"Could you cite some concrete step, some particular decisions taken by the council?"

"Let's take the question I just mentioned, earnings. By decision of the council, the factory went over to a new principle of remuneration for work done as of January 1, 1988. We all - and that includes myself - get a fixed minimum now - 120 leva a month. The rest depends on the results of the previous month's work, on the fulfilment of contracts."

"What does 'the rest' amount to?"

"The average wage on the scale of the whole factory is between 220 and 230 leva. But, I repeat, if the sales are good, if our clothes are bought up quickly, the worker in the department with the best showing can bring home 300 leva and more. Reducing the time required to put a model into production merits another increase in earnings. Keeping up with the latest fashion trend also fetches an extra pay. In this way we ourselves keep production up to the mark."

"What, then, are the functions of the higher link, the Rila Amalgamation?"

"It sets us a number of obligatory standards as regards depreciation of equipment, our hard currency programme, the quality and the proportion of diverse output. And that is all. This is a far cry from the old way of doing things when every aspect of the development and the work of the factory was regulated in advance. Now it is rather a matter of guidelines."

I could not but note the similarity of approach to planning here to that in Soviet enterprises. But what struck me about the practice of our Bulgarian friends was that the relations between the enterprise and the amalgamation are simplified to the maximum and limited to only a few aspects. Of course our ministries have far wider functions than the Bulgarian associations, but there is something to think about here.

"To get back to the economic council..."

"Yes, its principal task is to char the general line of development of the collective up to the year 2000. That line to some extent coincides with the forecasting of technological progress trends in our particular field and also fashion trends. We are trying to view the present from the future, as it were, when our production will have been extended and when the Vitosha label, I am sure, will grace only clothes of the highest world standards."

"Development of the collective is not only an economic task. It is also a social task. What is being done in this direction?"

"The council attaches much importance to what we term the social infrastructure of our factory. It has already been created and will be expanded from year to year. It includes canteens at the factory and its subsidiary in the Blagoyev district, a shop, two lunch counters, a public services centre, a beauty parlour (most of our workers are women), a bus for the personnel, a pavilion selling Vitosha dresses and accessories, a pavilion selling vegetables and flowers, and also a greenhouse. What else are we going to have soon? We plan to extend our housing programme, to begin selling semi-cooked food products right in the workshops, and build a sports centre."

"I don't see any extra chairs in your office, Dimitr. Don't you hold any meetings here?"

"No, why should we? In general we have stopped holding conferences in the factory, and have also given up celebrations in the former sense, with reports and speeches and the rest of it. We have no time for such things. We try to settle matters on the spot, in the workshops. Simply and without any fuss. As you may have heard, Bulgaria has declared war on all kinds of ceremonial affairs, official manifestations, pompous, showy propaganda."

Self-management Bulgarian style

Atanas Ashminov, an engineer by training, is only three years older than the director of the Vitosha factory. A general meeting of delegates from the 28 enterprises belonging to the Rila Amalgamation elected him recently president of the Amalgamation, as his visiting card says, or, to be more precise, chairman of the council.

The Rila factories employ 36,000 workers. This army of machine operators and fashion designers is managed by an office staff of 70.

"Formerly the word 'management' for the industrial executive meant being handed down directives, orders, instructions," Ashminov said. "Today the command method is ending. Today we do what is consonant with exercise of the rights given the managers by those who have elected them - the workers, engineers and technicians. And we do it together with them."

"How does that work out?"

"To the 70 managerial workers who as professional are members of the Rila council, there are just about as many council members from the Rila subsidiaries - two from each. As a rule, a worker and the director. The economic council adopts administrative decisions and carries them into effect. In this way orders in the former sense of the word have been excluded from the sphere of 'amalgamation subsidiary' production relations. Why issue orders about things that have already been worked out and adopted by the economic council? This is what is meant by self-management."

"But state directives remain?"

"Yes, but they, too, have changed, they have become more laconic and more essential for the amalgamation. The main thing is that there is no planning from above. There are actually only three state directives pertaining to only three areas: the indicators in kind, commitments to the U.S.S.R. and other countries of the socialist community and to the capitalist market. Before the reform Rila used to receive assignments of fifty different kinds."

"Is self-management at amalgamation level limited to your own planning?"

"I would say that we are at the very initial stage in the development of self-management. This is a creative process. It cannot be confined to planning. The main thing is to boost production, modernize it, create a flexible structure and adapt to the Western market - a new and rather unaccustomed experience for us - and of course new financial thinking is needed. Each of these tasks is part of the general problem of independent management."

"In other words, you associate the entire future of Rila with self-management?

"If only that were so. Much does not depend on us. The Bulgarian workers, in our branch of industry at any rate, are the victims of a certain unfairness, which the council they elected is powerless to eliminate. Here is an example: a suit of clothes made by us, in no way inferior to the Finnish in quality of fabric or workmanship, is priced lower in hard currency because of the inferior packing. We do not know how to present our goods. The culture of packaging has not yet reached us, it is not developed in our country. The result is that the worker loses in terms of earnings, which as you know, depend on profit. This is a striking example of the old approach."

"But to continue your thought, orientation on the Western market as the source

of hard currency would seem inevitable. Why should hard currency make the weather in the matter of wages?"

"Let us take stock of the situation," Ashminov said. "We are still experiencing a shortage of materials and equipment. The American automatic cutting machine Bugatsevsky has at the Vitosha factory is a rarity; visitors are always taken to see it. To modernize, to purchase technology, to reach the European level, our enterprises (and I believe the same applies to the Hungarian, Polish, Soviet and other enterprises) need hard currency. It can only be obtained (if we exclude state subsidies) by increasing sales on the Western markets."

"A vicious circle?"

"Something like it. It's a knotty problem. What's needed is a new approach to the relations within the CMEA framework, some rethinking has to be done there. New stimuli are needed that would make it profitable to work both for our friends in the socialist countries and for the home market as well. Self-management has made that quite clear."

Atanas Ashminov had touched upon what I feel to be a sensitive issue in today's economic reform both in Bulgaria and in the Soviet Union. Namely, the gradual discontinuation of state subsidies as dictated by cost accounting and self-financing. A factory that has already been modernized, which works well and has built up a reserve can easily dispense with state subsidies. But what about those that were among the lagging when the reform caught them unawares, so to say? Are they to go under, to pay not only for their own mistakes and sins, but to go bankrupt before having started to work in the new way? Would that be fair? But of this we shall speak below.

Why amalgamation

By recognizing the enterprise as an independent self-supporting economic unit, our Bulgarian friends ipso facto voted for making it if not completely then largely autonomous of the state planning bodies. What need was there, then, for an intermediary link - the amalgamation? I put this question to Dimitr Jordanov Jenev, chairman of the council of another big amalgamation, the Pirin, which produces footwear.

"We unite twenty-three shoe factories situated in the capital and in other towns," he replied. "Some of these factories employ as many as three thousand workers, others, no more than 120. Can a small factory find itself a market on its own? Or modernize effectively, or extricate itself from tight spots? How can we have a unified marketing policy if we are fragmented? That is why the amalgamation became necessary, as a coordinating and not administrative entity, of course."

"But where to draw the line between administration and coordination? And who is entitled to do that?"

"The enterprises themselves! The council of the amalgamation reports to them regularly on all aspects of its work, and on the results of measures taken."

"Has that simplified the work of the managerial personnel?"

"On the contrary. I personally am none too pleased with the new setup, because it restricts me in disposing of finances and resources."

"Why then did you agree to take this job when it was offered to you?"

"In the first place who could have known how things would shape after the elections? You cannot foresee everything. Secondly, my personal dissatisfaction does not prevent me from realizing that the self-willed, tough type of manager is on the way out. Or is he? Perhaps it is merely a matter of directing one's will along different lines? I don't know. I do know that it is not easy to work."

"But the reform has precisely the opposite purpose, hasn't it?"

"To make work simpler and easier, you mean? Of course. But day-to-day experience shows that we are having to pay for what happened before us. For instance, we are repaying the credits extended to enterprises before the Pirin Amalgamation was organized, credits which today I would never have accepted. But the debts are there and we have to repay them. My enterprises are two million foreign exchange leva in debt. These are some of the difficulties involved in becoming self-supporting and self-financing organizations. We inherit both the gains and the losses. We are paying for the old methods of running things. This accounts for my somewhat pessimistic attitude, which you may have noticed."

Sofia - Moscow

INDIA - SRI LANKA

Abiding by the agreement

● SRI LANKAN PRESIDENT JAYAWARDENE WAS THE CHIEF GUEST AT THE REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION IN INDIA, WHERE HE HAD TALKS WITH PRIME MINISTER RAJIV GANDHI WITH THE AIM OF RESUMING THE PROCESS OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE TAMIL-SINHALESE CONFLICT.

A political settlement is envisaged in the India-Sri Lanka agreement signed last July. But unfortunately the resistance of the forces inside Sri Lanka opposed to the agreement has not yet been broken. The fiercest opposition has been from leaders of the Tamil extremist organization Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who are demanding the formation of an independent Tamil state on the island.

The Indian troops remaining in Sri Lanka under a relevant agreement have routed the strongholds of the Tigers. However, some of the extremists have fled to barely accessible regions from which they are continuing their raids on Indian units and the civilian population.

The Sinhalese nationalist organizations have not moderated their opposition to the agreement either. The most bellicose of these, the extremist People's Liberation Front, has launched a broad campaign of baiting and intimidating the Sinhalese community leaders who favour a mutually acceptable compromise with the Tamils and back President Jayawardene's policy of actively involving India in the solution of the Tamil problem.

A similar position, determined not least by narrow considerations of political expediency, has been taken by some bourgeois opposition parties. Only this, I think, can explain a recent statement by Anura Bandaranaike, leader of the largest opposition Freedom Party, who declared that in the event of victory in a parliamentary election he would order the Indian troops to leave Sri Lanka within 24 hours of the formation of a government.

The opponents of the India-Sri Lanka agreement are spreading rumours that the Indians are going to keep their troops on the island for a long time and even to bring in more troops to "consolidate Delhi's dominant influence on Sri Lanka's policy." Another equally implausible rumour is that India intends to change the ethnic composition of the Eastern Province's population in favour of the Tamils by the mass repatriation of Tamil refugees from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The Jayawardene-Gandhi talks in Delhi have shown that, despite some difficulties, the leaders of the two countries are firmly resolved to work jointly for an early settlement of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka by political means.

SERGEI IRODOV

Alarming syndromes

Today's fascinating sporting events often result in grave injuries and occupational diseases. How can athletes be protected from them!

Yuri Samoilov discusses the problem with the head of the department of sports, ballet and circus injuries at the Central Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics, SERGEI MIRONOV.

Yuri Samoilov. Recently surgeons at the clinic of Pennsylvania University in the United States transplanted 40-odd centimetres of donor bone to a female patient who had sustained a grave injury to her right leg. The transplant included the knee joint, ligaments, tendons, part of the ankle, the knee cap, and part of the hip. What is your assessment of that operation!

Sergei Mironov. It is hard to judge such a sophisticated operation from a short press report. If the operation involved transplanting part of a conserved donor limb, we have been performing such operations for 30 years in the U.S.S.R. At this institute, for instance, we have a very good success rate in replacing injured bones and joints. Operations that have been performed here have involved replacing hip and knee joints simultaneously with titanium-molybdenum appliances as well as replacing the hip and shin bones.

Y.S. Artificial appliances and donor transplants are sometimes rejected by the recipient's body, and plastic appliances partly erode, losing their original characteristics. What can be done to avoid this!

S.M. At the moment we are pursuing three avenus of research. One way to avoid the body's rejection response is to select donor bones whose immunological characteristics are close to those of the recipient. Another way is to develop synthetic materials close to bone tissue in their biological and biochemical properties. Yet another method has been greatly advanced by the world-famous school of Dr Gavriil Ilizarov. The idea is to stretch what remains of the healthy bone using a special apparatus. My own view is that the best prospects are opened up by the research into artificial bone carried out at our institute, among others. The main difficulty here is to learn to use genetic information about bone cells.

Y.S. This sounds like something out of a sci-fi novel, but as far as I know, our famous weight-lifter Yuri Vlasov was operated on in Austria.

S.M. Well, no man is a prophet in his own country... As he himself has said on many occasions, Yuri Vlasov suffered from lumbar osteochondrosis aggravated by a hernia of the intervertebral disk. The pains he experienced were so severe that he decided to have an operation, and it was performed here in Moscow and not in Austria. Professor A. Kazmin of this institute removed the disk hernia and transplanted a metal plate to fix the back section of the spinal column. It was to have it removed that Yuri Vlasov went to Austria, although in my view there was no need for that as the second operation was much simpler.

Y.S. Back ache is the bane of the life of many weight-lifters. The introduction of belt straps and the abolition of one event somewhat lowered the rate of injuries to the spinal column, but, still, the way they set records in weight-lifting today is very often a terrible sight when, for instance, you see a close-up of the weight-lifter's face, distorted with strain, veins bulging. What might not happen next! Will he collapse from a stroke or will his heart burst! Will he go blind from retina detachment! No one can be sure. I think it is high time sporting achievements were given a closer scrutiny from the medical point of view. It cannot be true that there are no limits to human physical ability, as some sports journalists claim.

S.M. Today's records are very close to the limit of human potential, and we physicians know that full well. In the 1950s the superheavyweight Paul Anderson amazed the world with his seemingly unbeatable records. But several years later, Yuri Vlasov broke them all. You may recall the high jump records set in the 1960s by Valery Brumel. It seemed no one would ever break them, but they have been bettered, and by a large margin.

The advanced training techniques, today's sports gear combined with special

medicinal preparations make for ever more impressive performance, at the expense of latent resources, finite as they are, pushing them to the limit. In spite of the fact that many coaches understand that pushing on for more records, especially in weight-lifting, poses a serious threat to athletes' health, they seem unable to stop because of mental inertia. That is very sad. Physicians must have a say here. Sporting events where everything is dominated by the rush for records are approaching a very dangerous limit. The terrible strain to which athletes are exposed may result in multiple irreversible changes and even death. It is absolutely clear now that big-time sports exhaust the organisms of athletes. The greatest risks are run by those who abandon big-time contests and sharply reduce the physical strain. They very often end up suffering from advanced atherosclerosis and conditions affecting the joints or the spinal column.

Y.S. Since we are discussing weight-lifting, we should mention the first ever women's world championship held between October 30 and November 1, 1987 in the United States. Female weight-lifters from 22 countries took part. The Soviet Union did not take part, but we sent weight-lifter Yuri Vardanian for some reason, rather than a woman observer. The best results in the jerk, snatch and combined events average were 95, 125 and 220 kilograms, respectively, and they were shown by a U.S. athlete. What is your assessment of her achievement?

S.M. It depends on how you approach it. Women have been using weights to develop physical strength in many countries for quite some time now. For instance, our famous high jumper Tamara Bykova uses 100 kg weights in her training sessions. But using weights in workouts and competing in weight-lifting are two different things. By the way, the world record (105, 137.5 and 242.5 kg) was not beaten at that championship. This is probably not the limit, but my own view is that this is where they should stop. If strains of that kind are harmful to men, they obviously do women no good. I don't think that women should go in for weight-lifting, marathon races, judo, shot-putting or discus and javeline throwing. We may end up with women taking up boxing, for all I know.

Y.S. The pursuit of records has pushed into the background the aesthetic aspects of sports, which have been so highly valued sinced time immemorial, ever since the ancient Greek contests.

S.M. Indeed, one can no longer derive any aesthetic pleasure from watching some sporting events. Take so-called women's gymnastics, which can be more appropriately described as children's gymnastics. Taking part in international contests are girls of between 13 and 15 years old. Just look at them. Their bones are still soft, they are no more than 150 centimetres tall and weigh between 32 and 37 kg. Their hips are narrow and their chests disproportionately broad. Or take women swimmers. They tend to develop very broad shoulders. In other words, women who go in for some sports lose female grace and attraction. Their figures are deformed by exercise. In gymnastics, to make things even worse, the degree of absolutely unjustifiable risk keeps growing all the time.

Y.S. About 12-15 years ago when our famous gymnast Olga Korbut amazed the world with her incredibly sophisticated feats, calls were made to put a limit to sophistication.

S.M. Regrettably, they were not heeded and women's gymnastics continued to tend toward greater sophistication and greater risks.

Y.S. What can be done in your view to check and reverse that trend?

S.M. We must above all introduce better and more discriminating procedures in selecting young people taking up sporting careers. We must be able to filter out the youngsters who are unable to stand the loads to which big-time sports expose them because of the inadequacies of their muscles, skeletons, or cardiovascular system.

Very often the coaches are to blame for the injuries sustained by athletes. They sometimes do not allow any time for warming up before a workout. Sometimes a coach insists that an athlete perform against the advice of the team physician and in spite of the fact that the athlete is suffering from a minor injury.

Very often the venues for contests and training sessions are inadequately prepared. For instance, in 1987 Berezin of the Army Central Club soccer team sustained a grave head injury after falling on the concrete field of an indoor stadium. That injury could have been avoided if the synthetic cover had been thick enough. Unfortunately we lag far behind the West in the technical means of safeguarding athletes against injuries such as various bandages, helmets and other devices designed to protect limbs. For instance, in the United States professional football players, and American football is a very dangerous sport, cannot qualify for insurance if they fail to use the entire arsenal of protective gear, and sustain injuries.

Y.S. Now, if someone attacks a person in the street causing bodily damage he will be taken to court, but you can cripple your opposite number on a football pitch or during an ice-hockey match in front of thousands of spectators, not to mention millions of television viewers, and get away with it. It is high time sports grounds were covered by the rule of law.

S.M. Brutality and even cruelty have become so rampant that we really must take very strong action, going as far as to take those who deliberately injure their rivals to court. The gravity of deliberate injuries makes them especially dangerous, because athletes who are injured deliberately do not expect to be hit and cannot protect themselves. Paradoxically enough, causing a grave injury on a sports ground entails practically no liability. You cannot consider sending the perpetrator off or suspending him for a number of matches an adequate punishment.

I recall one of my patients, Andrei Antonevich of the Army Central Club handball team. He was gravely injured in the knee during a national championship. He told me that when he was about to dash for the goal and transferred his entire weight to his right leg the other side's player kicked him in that leg from behind

and knocked him off. That was an absolutely wild incident of course, but what amazed me about it was that neither the injured party, nor his coach ever thought of taking the fellow to court for causing bodily damage. This goes to show how far things have gone in sport.

Y.S. This is cold comfort, of course, but in the West they are even worse off than we are in that respect. No meeting between professionals passes without an accident there. The problems that we are facing here are little different from those facing other countries. What has the International Sports Medicine Federation, of which you are an executive member, done to improve the situation?

S.M. The Federation is facing many problems. We must define injuries more precisely, amend the rules of some competitions, develop and introduce reliable protective gear, and impose weight and age limits in certain sports. For instance, there are weight categories in wrestling, boxing and weight-lifting, but there are none in throwing events. In women's gymnastics and diving, 12-year-old girls compete with grownup athletes on what is clearly not an equal footing.

Y.S. As I see it, the situation is pretty grim. Before the Second World War the emphasis in this country was on promoting mass physical culture rather than encouraging sporting feats. Perhaps it might be a good idea if we went back to that prewar notion of sports?

S.M. I must disagree with you. Sports play a very important part in our lives and without them we would all lose a great deal. Sports not only provide us with a fascinating spectacle; they also bring nations closer together. But we must make sure that sports do no damage to the health of athletes.

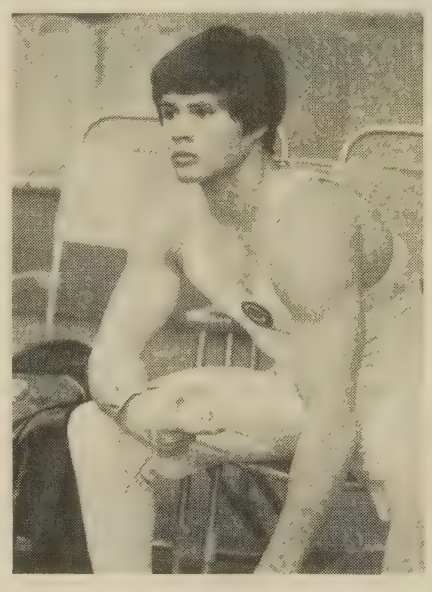
One thing that has been causing a great deal of concern in recent years is the use of hormonal drugs to increase muscle mass and strength, as well as the use of stimulants and sedatives and drugs that improve endurance. No measures designed to put an end to that kind of drug abuse will ever work unless athletes themselves realize what a terrible health hazard the drugs are. We must educate athletes and coaches to the risks this involves. The threat of this kind of drug addiction is far too real in this country.

Y.S. There have been numerous suggestions in the media that our so-called amateur sports men and women are really no different from professionals, because sports are their full-time jobs. It has also been suggested that they be enabled to retire having reached a certain age limit. What do you think about it?

S.M. I suppose this woiuld only be natural, but in my view pension schemes should cover only the stars, rather than all athletes. I mean world and Olympic champions. After all, these people have engaged in hard workouts for years. True, many of them have been given government medals and decorations, but they have also sustained injuries. After they abandon big-time sports, many of them find it very hard to adjust to normal life. Many of them have no profession or trade, and even though they may have the diplomas as coaches they sometimes cannot pursue that occupation.

Athletes who achieved world fame at the peak of their careers sometimes end up taking odd jobs as loaders in stores or even as grave-diggers. Some of them start drinking heavily and even end up in jail.

There are of course other examples of sports having helped young people make a brilliant career as journalists or public figures, but that does not put paid to the problem. An athlete leaving big-time sports needs both moral and material support very badly. It is hard to understand why a ballet dancer in this country qualifies for a pension after 20 years on the stage, but a prominent athlete does not.



Gymnast Dmitry Bilozerchev, one-time Institute's patient, sustained grave injuries but now shows amazing results.

TASS photo

Y.S. Many people believe that renowned athletes are less susceptible to injuries than their lesser colleagues.

S.M. That is not quite correct. There are of course famous athletes who, fortunately, avoided serious injury, but they are few and far between. When we marvel at a sporting achievement, little do we know sometimes that the athlete concerned may have only recently faced the dilemma of not only returning to sports or abandoning his career, but that of returning to normal life or becoming a cripple. It is our job as sports physicians not only to treat and cure our patients, but also to enable them to restore their full ability as athletes so that they could do at least as well as they did before the injury.

Several years ago we admitted the magnificent weight-lifter Yuri Zakharevich, who suffered from a terrible injury. The triceps of his left arm and elbow joint ligaments were ruptured. Now, if that sort of thing had happened to him in the past, the only thing he could reasonably have hoped for would have been to be able to move his hand. The techniques that we use now are far more sophisticated and we managed to restore him to his original form. Soon after that he set a world record and won the world title.

Natalya Bestemyanova won the world and European championships in ice dancing after she was operated upon for a grave knee injury at our institute.

The gymnast Dmitry Bilozerchev was perhaps the most difficult case I remember. He shot to fame having won the title outright while still at school. He was the youngest ever champion of the world, but having reached the top he succumbed to mundane temptations. Driving when drunk, he crashed his car into a lamp-post. He ended up with both bones in his left shin broken and extensive injuries to muscles and skin. At first we did not even rule out the possibility of an amputation. We could not even begin to imagine that one day he would be performing again, but five months after the operation he resumed training. He was in for more, as it turned out. He sustained another grave injury, this time to the right ankle while jumping off a horizontal bar and we readmitted him. I must give it to the lad, he won the 1987 world championship with flying colours.

Y.S. I have been to your department and seen that in spite of the cramped conditions your patients are in good spirits. They are laughing and joking and seem to be doing well in general.

S.M. I can tell you that they are determined to stay on in big-time sports. They regard this spell in hospital as a bothersome accident and we go out of our way to help them maintain a positive mental attitude, although it is not always easy. Our job is not only to treat an athlete but to return him or her to a sporting career. We must have the right kind of rehabilitation facilities for them so that they can begin training while still at the institute but, unfortunately, we cannot give them that opportunity. Clearly the funds provided by the Ministry of Health for food are scarce, especially compared to those provided for training sessions. If the U.S.S.R. State Sports Committee resolved the financial problems involved to make sure that members of national teams in our clinic have an adequate diet and the right rehabilitation facilities, we would be able to see to it that they returned to their careers much sooner. ■

The President's one comment was: "Staggering!"

The bomb and the president

SERGEI KARAGANOV, Cand. Sc. (Hist.)

In the sixties, American strategists suggested criteria (now current in Western military literature) whereby the loss by a country of at least a quarter or a third of its population, and a half or two thirds of its industry as a result of a retaliatory blow should be regarded as unacceptable damage (i.e., the damage which is certain to keep its leadership from perpetrating a nuclear aggression). It turns out that the loss of tens of millions of lives, the collapse of the economy and of the entire social structure **are** acceptable (not to mention "nuclear winter" and other irreparable ecological consequences). Those who have set such criteria afloat and still stick to them are trying to bring psychological pressure to bear on the other side, to intimidate it by implying that the U.S. is prepared to strike first even at the risk of forfeiting 50-70 million American lives! At the same time, the "unacceptable damage criteria" serve to justify arms buildup. By this logic the U.S. ought to be capable of disarming the enemy, by the very first strike, to such an extent as to keep the damage caused by retaliation within "acceptable" limits. This is supposed to compel the other side to build up its own arms - and to bear the extra expenses involved.

According to declassified documents, the U.S. leadership set the "unacceptable damage criteria" back in the early fifties. Unacceptability did not boil down to sterile figures of losses American armchair strategists had submitted to the public. Actually, "unacceptable" damage is a political notion. It applies not only to the population and the economy, but to the political and social system of the country concerned. It cannot but take into account the interests and mentality of the ruling class and the public at large. Finally, the notion includes the damage that can be done to the country's international positions. The declassified documents of the U.S. government go to show that in the fifties, when they had no "unacceptable damage" concept, American politicians proceeded - part deliberately, part intuitively - from the **political** meaning of "unacceptability."

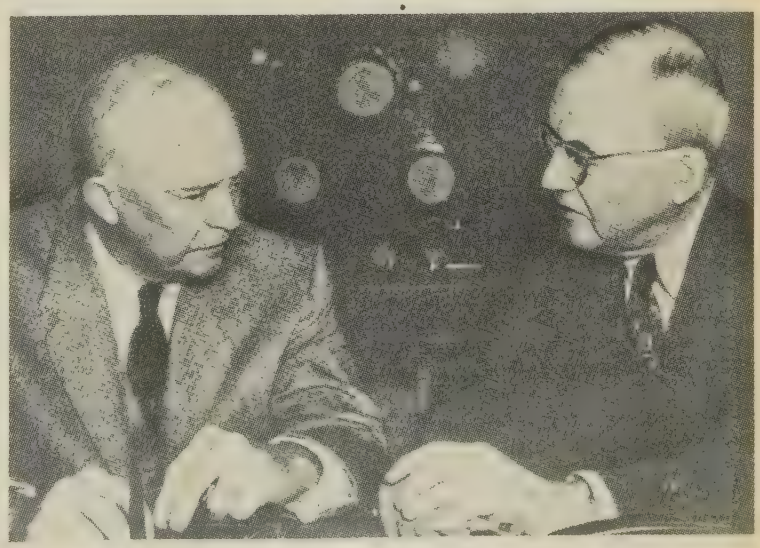
Continued. For beginning, see No. 5, 1988

"Unacceptable damage"

In 1952, the Special Evaluation Subcommittee of the National Security Council issued a report on the likely consequences of a Soviet atomic strike at the U.S. Its conclusions were horrifying. At a preliminary estimate, the bombings of air bases and cities would take nine million lives in 1953 and 12.5 million in 1955. A third of the American industry was threatened with total dislocation in 1953, and two thirds - in 1955. A surprise attack on the cities alone could, at American estimates, kill 24 million people in 1953 and 31 million in 1955. However, the potentially most serious consequence, the authors of the report pointed out, **"would be the psychological impact of a large-scale atomic attack. There would be morale and political problems of a magnitude which is impossible to estimate, or even comprehend..."** Another document warned that **"in such attacks there would be serious industrial damage, widespread dislocation of our highly integrated economic and social systems, loss of morale, panic, defeatism."**

This report was taken quite seriously. A natural question arose - how America, a society of individualists unaccustomed to privations and sacrifice, accepting no rigid organization and, besides, possessing an enormous quantity of firearms - would react to even a few atomic strikes? Wouldn't a social collapse ensue? Wouldn't the Americans vent their wrath upon the government, upon the President and his entourage personally, for having unleashed the war?

Here is what happened at the March 25, 1954, session of the National Security Council which discussed Directive NSC 5410 entitled **"U.S. Objectives in the Event of General War with the Soviet Bloc."** In the course of the discussion President Eisenhower objected to some of the provisions of the directive. Judging by the minutes of the session, **"the President expressed scepticism as to whether any nations as we now know them would continue to exist at the conclusion of this war... He believed that every single nation, including the United States, which entered into this war as a free nation**



President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.

would come out of it as a dictatorship. This would be the price of survival." This judgement merits special attention. The President obviously realized that a nuclear war would put an end to the American way of life and social system - in other words, to the America its leaders loved and sought to keep.

They could not but think of the economic damage a retaliatory strike would do to capitalist America. After all, one third, a half, or two thirds of the industry were, to them, not abstract figures but part of what they (and those who had put them in power) owned. A war which involved the U.S. territory's exposure to nuclear retaliation spelt (and still spells) a practically complete ruination of the propertied class. That was something worth pondering over.

Such judgements grew weightier with time. In June 1955 the U.S. government carried out a nuclear war game code-named Operation Alert. An analysis of simulated hostilities revealed that Soviet bombers could deliver retaliatory blows at 53 American cities. At a preliminary estimate, 8.5 million Americans would perish on the spot, and eight million would suffer bodily injuries. The President's one comment was: "Staggering!"

Ordered by the President to evaluate the anticipated damage that would be caused by nuclear war, a commission headed by Lt.-Gen. Harold George came up, at the end of 1955, with figures which were still more "impressive." The need for the evaluation had been prompted, among other things, by the events of March 1954 when a thermonuclear weapon test caused heavy radiation injuries to the crew of the Japanese fishing trawler The Lucky Dragon. Having read the George commission's report, President Eisenhower came to the conclusion that a Soviet strike would result in the United States' "total economic collapse" (to quote his diary). America would sustain enormous casualties. Up to 65 per cent of the population would need medical treatment (not forthcoming under the circumstances). "It would literally be a business of digging ourselves out of ashes, starting again," Eisenhower wrote. Judging by everything, the President did not relish this prospect.

"Anybody who thinks of that..."

It should be borne in mind that American democratic institutions and public opinion had their role to play among the factors which prevented the "war party" from gaining the upper hand in Washington. Directive NSC-68 said: **"It is important that the United States employ military force only if the necessity for its use is clear and compelling and commends itself to the overwhelming majority of our people. The United States cannot therefore engage in war except as a reaction to aggression of so clear and compelling a nature as to bring the overwhelming majority of our people to accept the use of military force."**

Strategic bombers - first strike weapons.

Indeed, the necessity to take the public opinion factor into consideration riled American politicians and prevented them not only from committing an aggression against, but also from blackmailing, the other side. In their narrow circle they kept thinking about ways to cast off these "fetters." Paul Nitze, a leading political strategist of those times, the head of the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff and actually the author of NSC-68, wrote the following in this connection in a memo of July 30, 1952:

"At the same time the American people must be brought to a recognition of the need to accept and live with a substantial degree of vulnerability, without an undue concentration upon personal safety which would prevent the projection of our strength outward to the enemy."

War hysteria and anti-Sovietism were whipped up as part of the effort to achieve this end. The harder the politicians tried, however, the more obvious it became to them that somehow there was nothing they could do about the Americans' "undue concentration upon personal safety."

To a certain extent, the official institutions of American democracy stood in the way of unleashing an aggression. The leaders of the postwar administrations remembered how much effort it had cost President Roosevelt to overcome Congress' resistance to the U.S. entering the war. As President Eisenhower reflected on the calls of the extreme right to strike first, he made the following entry in his diary:

"This would be not only against our traditions, but it would appear to be impossible unless the Congress would meet in a highly secret session and vote a declaration of war which would be implemented before the session was terminated. It would appear to be impossible that any such thing would occur."

At the beginning of 1955, after the Chiang Kai-shek group had provoked the Taiwan strait crisis, those in the Joint Chiefs of Staff and in the National Security Council insisted that atomic weapons be used against China. Again, the U.S. government had to refrain from this gamble, largely for fear of antagonizing the American and world public! At the tense press conference on March 16, 1955, Eisenhower confirmed John Foster Dulles' threat of the previous day. "We would probably make use of some tactical small atomic weapons," he said. The reaction to that was extremely negative from all quarters. Specifically, Dulles came under fire from the Democrats headed by Edlai Stevenson whom they had nominated for the successive presidency.

As a result, the President was compelled to admit, once again, that the U.S. could not, for political reasons, resort to even a "limited" use of atomic weapons. On April 5 he sent a memorandum to John Foster Dulles (now found in the Dulles' archives) which said:

"We have ample forewarning of the adverse character of world reaction that would follow any such action on our part, especially if we felt compelled to use atomic weapons - which we probably would in order to ensure success... Public opinion in the United States would, to say the least, become further divided. If conflict in that region should spread to global proportions, we would be entering a life-and-death struggle under very great handicaps... We would be isolated in world opinion."

This brings us to the next factor - the likely response of the allies. Apprehensions of the allies declining to support its

atomic venture repeatedly compelled Washington to tread very carefully. Its leaders feared that if they started even a "limited" or "peripheral" atomic war against its partners' will, this would lead to the disintegration of the Atlantic alliance, the resultant damage to the American positions being out of all proportion to any military gain. The authors of Directive NSC-68 pointed out that in the case of an atomic war Washington might fail to secure the support not only of the Americans who would doubt that it was a "just war":

"many more, proportionately," the Directive warned, **"would hold such views in other countries, particularly in Western Europe... It would, therefore, be difficult after such a war to create a satisfactory international order among nations. Victory in such a war would have brought us little if at all closer to victory in the fundamental ideological conflict."**

This reasoning grew still more convincing in the fifties. On October 13, 1953, President Eisnehower pointed out that "the use of atomic weapons in this contingency in Korea would cause a dangerous break in allied solidarity." He knew what he was talking about. Back during the Korean war the allies, who feared an atomic conflict would spread to Europe, insisted that Washington should abandon plans for the atomic bombing of Korea.

Curiosly, Secretary of State Dulles, who threatened "massive retaliation" and "rollback" in public, used an entirely different language within his circle. He even opposed those who rejected the preventive war concept and demanded that America should take advantage of the military superiority it had then to overthrow "communist regimes" in the P.R.C. and in Eastern Europe, at least, if not in the U.S.S.R. Such a line, Dulles told an NSC session on December 21, 1954, would lead either to a "total war"or to the collapse of the Western bloc because the allies would not support it. Secretary Dulles' conclusion was that "this kind of aggressive policy was not in the best interests of the United States."

In the early fifties, the allies stepped up their resistance to the American plans involving the use of atomic weapons or atomic blackmail. While American strategists could hope that they (in theory, anyway) would be able to weaken the forces of retaliation to such an extent as to remain completely or partly invulnerable, for Western Europe an atomic war meant a certain destruction. This certainly grew with time, and in August 1962 when the U.S. Defence Secretary Robert McNamara decided to probe the West European capitals for their reaction to the possibility of resolving the Berlin crisis "the nuclear way," the reaction turned out to be unequivocal. As Lord Mountbatten, Head of Britain's Defence Staff, eloquently put it, "My God, anybody who thinks of that is mad!"

(to be concluded)

BANGLADESH

Keen antagonism

● THE UNPRECEDENTED ANTI-GOVERNMENT MOVEMENT HAS NOW BEEN ACTIVE FOR MORE THAN THREE MONTHS IN BANGLADESH.

A score of political parties, only recently bitterly at variance with each other, are now jointly opposing the government of President Ershad, who came to power in the March 1982 coup. They are demanding his resignation and the transfer of power to a non-party man who would form a neutral transitional government capable of holding a fair parliamentary election.

Nationwide strikes that follow each other in rapid succession, mass demonstrations, the blocking of government offices, and other actions, taken by the opposition in an attempt to force the present administration to resign, have created a tense situation. Not infrequently police open fire. Seventeen people were killed and several hundred wounded in clashes between protesters and police in the port of Chittagong on January 24.

The unending riots are seriously undermining the economy, which has been in deep crisis for some time. During the 17 days of general strikes in November and December of last year, the economy suffered losses estimated by the Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry at 8.5 billion takas, or roughly 300 million dollars.

President Ershad first tried to suppress the anti-government movement by force. Over 5,000 activists belonging to the opposition parties were arrested. But the repression merely served to strengthen the movement. Most of the activists who had been detained had to be released. The state of emergency declared at the end of November did not help the government either. The opposition simply ignored it, and continued its mass protests.

The President made some tactical concessions to the opposition, but they failed to reduce the level of political confrontation. He dissolved the 19-month old parliament, scheduled a new parliamentary election for March 3, agreed to hold an early presidential election, and called for dialogue with the opposition. But the opposition parties flatly refused to be bought off with these concessions, insisting on the satisfaction of their principal demand - the resignation of President Ershad and his government.

To find a way out of the impasse, the authorities have recently started preparations for a general election, hoping to undermine the opposition's unity and draw at least one or two of the leading opposition parties to the polls. But this move did not split the opposition, which called a nationwide strike for the three days in January when the candidates were registered.

On the contrary, President Ershad's decision to hold an election caused a split in the government. The health and information ministers resigned from the Cabinet, pointing out that it was senseless to hold an election without the participation of the opposition parties.

Nevertheless, President Ershad and his retinue have not yet given up the idea of holding a parliamentary election in this extremely tense situation.

VLADIMIR PUCHKOV

REGROUPING IN HELL

What mercenaries talk about

The U.N. ad hoc committee on the drafting of an international convention against recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries held its 7th session in New York in late January. The committee was formed in 1980 after the world community had reached the consensus that mercenaries represented a dangerous form of international terrorism. In many countries recruiting them is regarded as a crime, but nonetheless mercenaries are never in short supply. In the mercenary market, as in any other, demand breeds supply. It is the duty of the world community to abolish the demand for mercenaries, outlaw them and, most importantly, see to it that its decisions in this respect are implemented. Over the eight years since the establishment of the U.N. special committee, the convention has never been adopted. Why? Mercenaries are not knight errants in their own right. They serve their masters, and the degree of their loyalty is proportional to their pay. Who hires them? The answer to this question suggests itself at once if one recalls where they are hired to fight: in Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Mozambique, Angola, Kampuchea...Those who employ them give them a carte blanche to kill.

This is no exaggeration. Just listen to the "soldiers of fortune" I chanced to meet in Thailand, and judge for yourself.

Patpong Road

If it's your first time in Bangkok, your hosts are certain to take you to Patpong Road to give you an idea of what the real East is like. In my case, no exception from this rule was made. My Thai guide wanted me to take away a standard image of Thailand, with its golden Buddhist temples glittering in the sun, its shaven-headed saffron-robed monks, its white elephants, and numerous massage parlours offering their services to men pouring in from all corners of the earth in pursuit of exotic pleasures... But a tourist's fate is sometimes unpredictable.

On Patpong Road I met a Westerner in a light blue shirt open almost all the way to his waist. Having guessed my profession at a glance, he approached me and, without excessive preliminaries, volunteered to tell me about himself. He then said he would like me to meet his friends - professional murderers who fought and killed under contract.

I didn't know what to make of his words. Was this some kind of practical joke?

"Are you sure your friends would be willing to talk to a journalist? Considering their line of business, publicity..."

"Won't do them no harm," he finished the sentence gleefully. "It's publicity that gets us fat contracts. Personally, I'm not much of a talker, but when I see a newsman I feel like unbosoming myself to him. Why? I've been kicking my heels for six months now. Where're you staying?"

I told him.

"My friends are meeting at your hotel tonight." He rose and flicked cigarette ash off his shirt. "See you later."

Evening

The man from Patpong Road was waiting for me in the foyer, which was partitioned by glass into expensive little boutiques.

"Have you been here long?" I asked, looking at his swarthy face.

"Twenty years in Southeast Asia, and in Thailand, with short intervals, since 1976, when the American contingent went home."

"Why didn't you go? What keeps you in Thailand?"

"Anyone who'd had a brush with the law preferred to stay here," he grinned. "The local cops don't mind our peccadilloes...Besides, I have some old scores to settle with the Vietnamese. And it's easier to reach them from here."

"Why have you taken up this trade?"

"First, I like the pay. And second, just handling a weapon gives me a thrill. It's a man's job."

"Aren't you afraid of death?"

"Danger gives my life meaning," he answered unhesitatingly, without groping for words. Was he ad-libbing or had he learned his speech by heart, I wondered. "After I've killed an enemy, I feel really alive. In a rut you can't fulfil yourself. It's only when you engage an enemy that you become a man worthy of the name. Each of us 'soldiers of fortune' fights his own war from which only the better armed, stronger and smarter belligerent emerges the winner."

"Combat as an emotional experience," I quoted the name of an old bestseller. "You like killing, is that what you mean?"

"I like winning," he retorted.

"In the name of what?"

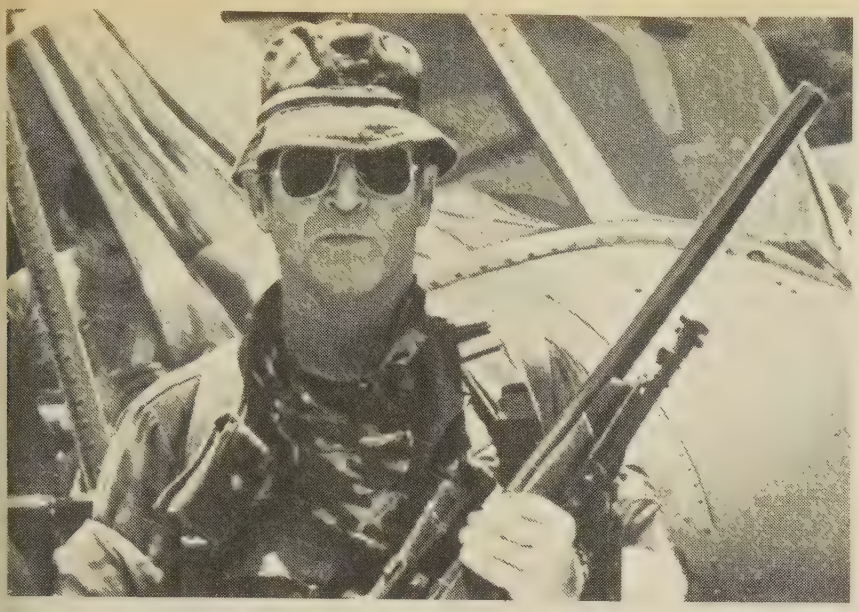
"I fight the barbarism that threatens civilization. I've been waging my war for twenty years...Some day my services will be recognized..."

Night

I glanced at my watch and asked:

"Where are we going now?"

"In almost every American city there is an American Legion post where war veterans meet," he explained. "In Bangkok, U.S. ex-servicemen have set up a post of the American Legion in exile - a club of sorts open not only to soldiers but also to intelligence officers and even to some foreigners who have been of help in carrying out various American combat actions. We're having a rally tonight. Some of our veterans used to serve in the Civil Air Transport line. They helped the



Guomindang men, then South Korean formations, and still later - the French in Indo-China... Quite a few Air America pilots have settled in Bangkok. Your colleagues claim the company is run by the CIA. The Bangkok post is headed by Helset, whom we call Cash because he's so greedy."

Cash had managed to bring two thousand men together in Bangkok, "redundant" Vietnam war veterans for the most part. They have now been "working" under contracts for over a decade.

"In the life stories of these guys you can study the history of America's defeats," my companion told me. "They worked in Iran, Angola and Nicaragua, starting, of course, with Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia."

We took the lift to the top floor and walked down a long corridor to the bar that had been reserved by the veterans for the night.

Spotting us, a young man seated by the door rose threateningly to his feet. My companion said something to him in an undertone.

We found a vacant table and sat down. Some men walked over and joined us.

One of those present turned out to be well known for his collection of human ears preserved in alcohol: during the Vietnam war he paid mercenaries a few dollars for each ear, thus encouraging them to vigorous action against communist rebels. However, there was no knowing whether any particular ear had actually belonged to a communist, so his masters had suspected him of squandering money and cut his pay.

The meeting began on a note of mourning. Cash delivered a short oration on the occasion of a CIA man's death while in Nicaragua.

"For certain reasons his activity was not in the public eye," Cash recited almost without consulting his prepared text. "Few people were aware of his contribution to the common cause... A war-weary wanderer, he was alone and knew it as he breathed his last. He was a frontline fighter, the kind of man who is always ready to go where he is needed most. Such men too are looking for the Holy Grail in their own way."

"If he had handed rifles around and told us to take Laos from the Communists, we would have followed him, all of us," a middle-aged man seated next to me said softly.

Morning

A shortish man was wished many happy returns of the day. He was wearing a dung-coloured T-shirt with a transfer of a skull with a red beret clenching a knife between its teeth and the words: "Old mercenaries never die. They go to hell to regroup."

On my way out of the bar I heard Cash announce solemnly: "Look here, men, now we're alone I have important news for you..."

Getting away from the veterans proved no easy matter. The man from Patpong Road followed me, and continued talking while we waited for the lift.

"We meet twice a year. No place like Bangkok. In 1976 we helped the authorities purge the city of Reds on our initiative. Shot students right in the streets," he chuckled. "So they allowed us to stay and paid us, but too little. Me, I need people who pay well. I'm willing to work for any who's not a miser, whether he is black, yellow or red..."

With the resentment of a loser who hadn't recouped, he hissed: "I hate the Vietnamese, Laotians and Khmers, I hate their mothers, I hate their fathers, I hate their children, I hate their grandfathers, I hate all their ancestors. They're evil."

The lift door slid open, and, still muttering under his breath, he stepped into it with me. It went down so fast it might have been bound for the hell where mercenaries regroup.

Reading books and virtues

No mercenary ever calls himself a mercenary. Mercenaries prefer romantic euphemisms like "wild geese," "soldiers of fortune" and "war dogs," and are angry with those who regard their motives as pecuniary and deny them idealism, manly valour and nobility of purpose. In their publications they not only advertise deadly weapons, but also put "clients" in the way of "employers," and vice versa, and set out a certain system of views - their mercenary philosophy.

These "soldiers of fortune" claim that what they fight for is neither money nor an idea (they are no fanatics). They sign up on the assumption that wars and heroes keep civilization from degeneracy, from "falling into effeminacy, insignificance and sloth," as the German publicist Ernst Moritz Arndt put it. This brings us to another point, which is also worth reflecting on.

Nobody is born a mercenary, but what compels a man to become one? Surely not the pay alone, for there are other ways to make a living. Where does the professional detachment of a hired murderer, the professional murderer's mentality, come from?

The age-old cult of the hero? School reading books full of stories of fearless sword-brandishing warriors? Mercenaries are products of militarized thinking. Today most of those held up as models to imitate wear military uniform; in fact this has been the case since time immemorial. Any attempts to "demob" them meet with angry rebukes. To quote Arndt's words uttered back in the early 19th century: "We have been lulled and cheated by false teachings on sensitive humanism and philanthropic cosmopolitism (the high-sounding foreign words used to describe this rubbish) into believing that soldierly valour is worthless, that courage is always exaggerated, that manliness is dull, and staunchness onerous; indolence and feminine virtues are exalted to the skies, with the result that we look in vain for the virtues of the past."

Mercenaries never call themselves mercenaries.

LEONID MLECHIN

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A STUDY IN PASTEL

Fantasy and reality

in Alexander Tyshler's art

The exhibition of paintings, drawings, woodcarvings and stage sets in the gallery on Kuznetsky Most in the centre of Moscow marks the 90th birthday of the distinguished Soviet artist Alexander Tyshler. It integrates in a single amalgam fact and fancy, fairy tale and real life, recollections and dreams of the future. Tyshler's original world is a realm of impressions carried over from childhood reading, from myths and legends, and from Shakespeare's tragedies. Indeed, transmuted in the artist's mind, they have acquired a unique new life on paper and canvas in the wood.

Alexander Tyshler was never showered with prizes and awards, nor did his name ever figure among the elite mentioned at various official ceremonies. But he was undeterred by this as he prized above all the recognition of his own audience.

Most of his pictures make up series on various themes. At different times he reverted to his favourite subjects, with boyhood recollections generating sequences such as "Childhood Neighbours," "Bridegrooms," "Brides," and "The Fairground Show." In the first of these he portrays the world of prerevolutionary lower--middle-class flats with their wall clocks, family portraits, dusty heavy draperies, and leather-upholstered sofas. It shows a father and his family staying motionless from the canvas, as if waiting to be photographed.

Similarly kindly and naive are the brides and bridegrooms from the typical whistle stops of provincial Russia. A sun--drenched kingdom is recaptured in the flowers, in wedding streamers and fanciful gowns of the brides and the quaint suits and bowler hats of the bridegrooms.

Tyshler's favourite subject is the world of the theatre. His childhood recollections of strolling players produced the series "Fairground Show," "Russian Folk Puppet Theatre," and "Gypsies," whose characters seem at once so very much alike and yet so different. A slight change of expression, a slightly different colour scheme, a small alteration in detail, and the picture radiates an entirely different mood. We are treated to a kaleidoscope of commedia dell'arte characters, singing gypsies and fairground clowns who merge into a single magical world. Tyshler's soft pastel tints are characteristic. By night the whole scene is shrouded in misty moonlight, while by day, there is neither blazing sunshine nor leaden cloud.

Tyshler's Civil War series are echoes of his youth. Before us unfold in a somewhat primitivist manner such tragedies as "Death of the Commander," "The Farewell" and "The Saving of the Standard." "The Farewell," portraying a soldier being seen off by family and friends, is steeped in a lyrical melancholy that reveals the inner pain of parting. In contrast are the grotesque scenes recording the depredations of Makhno and his men in the Ukraine in the 1920s, such as "Makhno before a Mirror," depicting the anarchist leader trying on a dress, or "Makhno and His Band." Tyshler was directly involved in the Civil War: he joined the Red Army in 1919 and was delegated to a special task force.

Tyshler was born in Melitopol in the Ukraine in 1898, the son of a cabinetmaker. The secrets of wood carving were handed down from generation to generation: Alexander inherited his father's affection for the medium wood and in his sculptured pieces preferred to give free play to the fantasies of nature rather than to his own imagination.

His figures carved in wood have something in common with the characters depicted in the paintings, in that most of whom are women. For Tyshler the woman symbolizes kindliness, peace and success. They wear strange attire and headgear, bedecked in lovely palaces and towers, and their hair is adorned with ships, flowers, mansions and candles.

Though he has also done some realistic portraits of women, for the most part they are steeped in a fairy-tale atmosphere. Indeed, his canvases undergo an amazing metamorphosis with each item depicted assuming a totally new function and blending into strange, seemingly incompatible combinations.

Tyshler's watercolours are tender and limpid even when observed in the exotic landscapes of Caucasian Adjaria and in the "Batumi" series, where he has striven to avoid garishness. The coupling of Indian ink with watercolour imparts greater expressiveness: against the background of a slumbering nightbound city the figure of "The Fashionable Lady" seems enigmatic. And again, we find the same lyrical misty quality in the grotesque pencil drawing "The Ball of the Cows."

Tyshler is equally at ease with oil, watercolour, Indian ink, pencil, gouache and wood. His series "The Coopers," likewise associated with boyhood reminiscences, are in gouache. His representation of a slaughterhouse wells up into a tragic condemnation of cruelty, as does his "Pogrom."

Tyshler has done many illustrations of the writings of Mayakovsky, Selvinsky and Marienhof. His portraits of Anna Akhmatova and Lily Brik are extremely exciting.

Stage and costume designs feature extensively in his work. These are mostly for such plays as "Richard III," "Hamlet," "Othello," "Macbeth" and "King Lear," by his beloved Shakespeare. Unfortunately much of his work was never seen on the stage. Tyshler also designed sets and costumes for many other plays at the Bolshoi in Moscow, the Leningrad Drama Theatre, the Gypsy Theatre Romen and the Jewish Theatre, to mention only four. Though unexpectedly original in conception these designs were easy to execute.

His series "Fascism" portraying a faceless conglomeration of human carriers of death and piles of death--dealing metal, produces an unforgettable impression. We are treated to an unusual aspect of Tyshler's creativity - lifeless faces and figures, cold colours, and unnaturally pointed angles.

These are characteristic of his "The Nazis Assemble," "The SS Deathshead Division," and "Destroyers of Life," while his "Gunning of the Pigeon," which provides so stark an image of a world bloodied by appalling slaughter, is profoundly symbolic. Similar in tone to the series "Fascism" is another, "Inferno and Paradise." Indeed, in his "The Devil's House" we see the same faceless masks as the deadly masks in "The Nazis Assemble." The silhouette of "The Devil's House" is as sinister as that of a German panzer.

Yet in Tyshler's work optimism prevails. His fairytale cities of the Elephant, the Camel and the Giraffe are inhabited by merry, kind, smiling folk. He has absolute faith in the magic of his fairy tales, a world without suffering and war. A dreamer? No, a romantic.

ANNA SMIRNOVA

ortrait of Anastasiya
anovna Tyshler.
legend of
ri-centaur. No. 1
nyon Kotko".
ackdrop design sketch.

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